

Exploring Digital Out-of-School
Identity Construction And
Multiliteracy Practices Of Two
Teenagers: A European Case Study

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DECLARATION

I, Julia Rodríguez confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed: Julia Rodríguez

'If you want to ask questions about literacy, don't look at reading and writing in themselves, but as they are embedded within specific social practices'.

'If we want to study literacy, we are led inevitably to the full array of semiotic resources with which people mean and be'.

(Gee, 1999, p. 159)

ABSTRACT

Teenagers' online activities can reveal rich and varied literacy behaviours. While these teenagers may experience cultural and linguistic diversity out of school, and construct identity digitally using their literacy skills in a highly productive and engaged fashion, they may struggle to express their literacies and identities in school settings. When viewed through a New Literacies (Gee, 2000; Street, 1995) and Multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) perspective, closer analysis of the predispositions, social attitudes, and activities of these teenagers reveal significant educational advantages that may go largely undetected by educators in the classroom. This thesis presents two ethnographic case studies, involving two teenagers, who actively sought out and engaged in online spaces where they could establish identities, practice multimodal literacies, and seek out affinity groups in keeping with their personal interests and abilities. Findings reveal that out-of-school literacy practices are sophisticated, multimodal, meaningful, real and important for identity construction in teenagers. Identities online and offline melt in a way that differentiation is non-existent for them, also literacy and identity practices seem not to be bound in this study to the physical place in which they occur, but to the actual opportunities to develop and implement these practices. They are not linked either to generational gaps or digital native divides. This research is of significance to educators as it demonstrates the manner in which digital technologies used by teenagers in out-of-school settings can inform multiliteracy practices in the classroom through the

recognition of the role they already play in teenagers' literacy and identity construction.

Keywords: Multiliteracies, Multimodality, Digital Identity Construction, Out-of-School Practices

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ABBREVIATIONS

APP:	Internet Application
CALL:	Computer Assisted Language Learning
EdD:	Educational Doctorate
FB:	Facebook
HE:	Higher Education
ICT:	Information and Communication Technologies
IFS:	Institutional Focused Study
IOE:	Institute of Education
L2:	Second Language
MOE:	Methods of Enquiry
NLS:	New Literacy Studies
NLG:	New London Group

PAR:	Parent as Researcher
PRS:	Postgraduate Research Students
SNSs:	Social Networking Sites
SPPU:	Savitribai Phule Pune University
UCL:	University College of London
UCP:	Université de Cergy Pontoise
UVA:	University van Amsterdam

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

In this section I define key terms that are used throughout this research and that are central to the foundations of this study.

- ***Digital Identities:*** In this context collections of data about a subject that represent attributes, preferences and traits. Digital identities are understood as representations of identity through online self-expression by means of self-publishing, self-reflection, and self-documentation (Stern, 2008). They are part of community involvement, which itself provides strong incentives for creative expression and active participation in communities of practice (Jenkins, 2006).
- ***Digital Literacies:*** Represent the essential skills for managing information and communication in the digital world.
- ***Digital Media:*** Encompasses a wide range of non-analogue technologies, including cell phones, the internet, software applications that power and run on the internet, digital images, digital video, videogames, social media, digital audio and electronic books.
- ***Digital, Online and the Internet:*** I use these terms in this study in an interchangeable way.
- ***In-school literacy:*** Related to literacy practices in the school settings or formal education.
- ***New Literacies:*** It is a broader term connected to the New Literacy Studies and the New London Group. It places emphasis on the newly

emerging implications of literacy in a highly digitally driven environment and the social nature of all types of discourse such as new media and participatory culture.

- **Multiliteracies:** The concept of multiliteracies was proposed by The New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996, p.63) to address 'the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and the increasing saliency of cultural and linguistic diversity'. The term refers to the 'increasing complexity and interrelationship of different modes of meaning' (Ibid, p.78). It addresses the need to communicate across cultures and languages in an increasing interconnected world. This thesis follows a sociocultural approach that sees literacy as socially situated and given meaning through historical, political, and cultural contexts (Gee, 1990; Scribner & Cole, 1999).
- **Multimodality:** Meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal in which written-linguistic modes of meaning inter-face with visual, audio, gestural and spatial patterns of meaning, and new forms of literacy associated with emerging multimedia, mediated by texts, images, videos, music, etc.
- **Out-of-school Literacy:** Meaning in this study digital literacy practices related to the home setting and that usually take place in teenagers' leisure time. Literacy activities that are not specifically related to school assignments or imposed by formal education.
- **Social Media:** Refers to the collective of online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content

sharing and collaboration. In this study: Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and YouTube.

THE 2,000 WORD STATEMENT

Personal Learning Experience

I have revised my Annual Progress Reviews for the years 2013 to 2017, the three 5000-word assignments, the IFS and the feedback provided by the examiners for all of them. In the reviews there is always the positive encouragement provided by my supervisor regarding the trust he put on me to be able to complete my EdD. The following paragraphs describe my personal learning experience.

1. *Module: Foundations of Professionalism: An Analysis of ESL Teaching Styles in a French university: Professionalism and Policy Change.*
2. *Module: Methods of Enquiry 1: Review of the Effects of Two Interactive Dictionaries on Short and Long-term Vocabulary Acquisition For Intermediate French Law Students of English (L2)*
3. *Module: Methods of Enquiry 2: Teachers' Attitudes to Using New Technologies for English L2 Teaching in a French University.*

The Institutional Focus Study (IFS) was completed in 2014-2015 and submitted in February 2015. This is a 20,000-word research project that was the result of previous learning and interests related to the three previous assignments. Entitled '*Postgraduate Research Students' Perceptions of English (L2) Implicit and Explicit Vocabulary learning with CALL*', it looked into the perceptions of PRS students on the incorporation by their institution (UCP France) of technology for English (L2) learning.

My research throughout the EdD has focussed in learners or teacher's experiences linked to the common connecting theme of new technologies and how these affect roles, education and learning.

The assignment for Module 1: 'Foundations of Professionalism' was a first approach from the point of view of the students on their perceptions about the kind of English teaching they expect in HE. It reflected on the different meanings of being a non-native HE English (L2) professional linked to the way they are trained and have access to professional development in France. In this assignment I approached the literature related to French English (L2) teachers at HE institutions in France and their teaching environments, common practices, and the contrast with British models of professional development to suggest policy and practice changes.

The importance of professional development activities in teachers' beliefs and practices derives from the literature review, (Perraton et al., 2002; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Villegas-Reimers, 2003), but also from the education policies implemented in each country and ultimately in how this affects the kinds of learning students perceive. The conclusions of this thesis indicated that teachers should play an important role in policy design as main actors of its implementation.

The second paper, written for the module on '*Methods of Enquiry 1*' was the initial source of inspiration for the IFS research proposal. I was very interested in vocabulary development in English (L2) and much of the feedback I received from my students dealt with their lack of vocabulary in

English as a deterrent to communicate. At the same time the UCP was heavily investing in the digital to boost students' languages skills. In this research paper I focussed on the role of multimedia-enhanced dictionaries in vocabulary learning. I looked into the literature of vocabulary acquisition, explicit and implicit learning from empirical and conceptual studies and studies related to online dictionaries for vocabulary learning in English (L2). In the same way, my thesis is still concern with learning and the digital, but it has gone a step further by considering not only the vocabulary acquisition of a language but also the social and cultural contexts in which a language is used and the aims and backgrounds of the users. This first paper on methods of enquiry was good practice to consider the aspects involved in the construction of a research project, but it showed also the naivety of my research questions in relation to the broad and complex theme of vocabulary acquisition:

1. Will the group with access while reading to the two-multimedia tools (Lingro.com and Visualthesaurus.com) have higher scores on the final vocabulary test than the group using paper word lists?
2. If so, will this effect be maintained when tested after a 4-week period at the end of December 2013 term?

I did not take into account a lot of variables that influence vocabulary acquisition, for example the teaching styles, the nature of the vocabulary intended to teach, the learners' particularities and language backgrounds or the kind of test that I was going to employ to measure acquisition.

Furthermore, I tried to answer the research questions by using a quantitative approach in which I had no experience. In hindsight, I believe that the research questions would have been better answered by using a mixed method approach to include the learners' perceptions on their vocabulary acquisition. Finally, the ethical considerations did not go into depth concerning possible ethical issues with participants in the study. This is something I have changed in my thesis.

In '*Methods of Enquiry 2*' I took the point of view of University academics regarding uses of new technologies in the classroom for English (L2). It was also a paper linked to vocabulary teaching where I used a pilot interview before carrying on with the semi-structured interviews for the study. I wanted to explore qualitative methods to look into academics' attitudes, and I felt that a qualitative approach was the best way to give voice to what they thought about this matter. I learnt new research skills about designing questions for interviews, transcription, coding and dealing with bigger amounts of data. This paper together with the previous one resulted in my decision to use a mixed-methods approach for the IFS.

The IFS inquired into postgraduate research students' perceptions of English (L2) implicit and explicit vocabulary learning with CALL. The study adopted a mixed methods approach (Robson, 2011), within an interpretative research paradigm aimed at understanding phenomena through the meanings that people attach to them (Greenhalgh, 2001). I used semi-structured interviews and think-aloud observation protocols when the participants were online,

and three online questionnaires prior to the interviews distributed to the 96 total population of Postgraduate research students (PRS) at the UCP. I collected a total of 43 replies from which I chose 6 informants for the interviews.

The IFS was a more elaborated research project in which I put great effort in thinking carefully and in detail about the methods, the ethics, the process of collecting and analysing data and the literature review related to the field. For example, the pilot before the semi-structured interviews. The experience from the previous research modules helped to hone my research skills and my awareness about the research process. Nevertheless, I realise now that the organisation of the data analysis in two chapters, one for qualitative and the other for quantitative data, demanded laborious reading. There is no doubt for me now that a single chapter combining the data would have resulted in a clearer analysis and would have avoided the reader the inconvenience of going back a forward from the qualitative to the quantitative data in the study. It was one of the reasons why I chose an integrated chapter in my thesis where data collection and analysis were included under the same section.

The positive aspects of the IFS for me were the ability to carry on a research project from the beginning to end in my own professional environment and to acquire the necessary research skills to undertake the thesis. It led to choosing qualitative analysis for the thesis as I realised this was what interested me, and I enjoyed the most and to acknowledge myself as a social anthropologist. Although the IFS subject was independent of the research in

the thesis it helped to lay the empirical and conceptual foundations for it since my previous research about vocabulary learning from different perspectives fits into multiliteracy and multimodality in that it explains how meaning is created and conveyed through a variety of different modes of communication in different social contexts.

Professional Outcomes and Impact

When I enrolled in the EdD programme I was a university academic interested in many study areas. The doctoral studies had turned me into a researcher. This is not something that comes out of the blue, but from practice, hard work and from questioning oneself a lot during the whole process. The impact of these five years has been felt in relation to my:

- Teaching practice in general
- Research profile
- Supervision of students' research at Master level
- Teacher training
- Opportunities to inform policy

Teaching practice in general

The research conducted during these last five years has had an impact into my teaching by realising of the different perspectives that converge in education. Exploration of the literature related to learning, English as (L2), how the digital is perceived by learners and teachers, how learning is also

informed by what individuals are and do in any context of their lives, and findings from my own research have contributed to shape the contents of my own teaching programmes and those of my department at the UCP. Findings from the IFS have also contributed to establish a clearer policy regarding digital expenditure by the UCP Doctoral School in accordance with real demands from learners.

Research profile

I began the EdD with no research or academic identity. It has been built throughout this process and the opportunities I have had to disseminate my work in my own institution and abroad. Developing my critical skills, authorising myself and engaging with the research community I work in and studying in an environment that fosters research for better practices and encourages exchange among colleagues has contributed to enhance my professional identity. I would only like to see more institutional support for new researchers, as it is a vital aspect to build one's identity as a researcher and to make sense of the research process.

Supervision of students' research at Master level

My comprehension of the research process shaped by my own experiences in writing the IFS and the thesis. It provided me with a more realistic approach to the research process and the reiterative nature involved in any empirical study. The research papers that I wrote for each of the modules and the IFS that preceded the thesis proposal have contributed to developing the skills needed to accomplish the thesis and are helping now Master research

students at the SPPU to reflect upon their own experience and to provide them with the competences required to write their own dissertations.

Teacher training

Most of the research I have carried out during my EdD has been integrated into the two annual teaching training sessions organised by my department at the UCP in France. These events were an opportunity for me to receive feedback and to share with colleagues their insights into my findings. The thesis will also serve for different training sessions for colleagues and future teachers at the SPPU in India.

Opportunities to inform policy

I believe research serves to inform, to push boundaries, to contribute to knowledge, but also to change policies. My thesis hopes to contribute to all these and to add to the on-going debate on the digital in learning in in and out of school settings. My research activity has received interest from the SPPU to develop a free pilot App for teenage learners in rural Marathi schools in Maharashtra, India, implementing my findings.

To conclude, I chose to undertake the EdD at the IOE for several reasons, like the prestige and quality of the programme and the institution, the convenience of the location as I was travelling from Paris, but also because I felt that doing a professional doctorate encouraged me to look at my own practice and context, to draw my research questions from it, and to articulate and critically interrogate my own professional knowledge. This is not the sole

source of knowledge of course, as I also drew on relevant scholarly literatures, but the desire to do research that will have an effect on my work setting was fundamental for me. Current pedagogies based on multiliteracy encourage teachers to build classroom work on the learner's previous knowledge, experiences and interests to meet their needs. My thesis grew from my commitment to deliver to my students at the best of my capabilities taking into account their identities so that they can benefit the most from an engaged professional who questions practices including her own.

CHAPTER ONE: TEENAGERS DIGITAL LITERACY AND IDENTITY PRACTICES IN OUT OF SCHOOL SETTINGS

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the rationale underpinning the context of this study and the research plan for this thesis. It locates the research topic within the sociocultural tradition of literacy and identity studies in informal educational contexts, which looks at literacy not as neutral or existing independently of specific contexts of social practice, but as evolving in contexts involving particular relations and structures of values, beliefs, goals and purposes, interests, and power (Street, 1994).

The chapter justifies as well the need for the research and concludes by outlining the order of chapters contained in this thesis.

In education, literacy has traditionally been thought of in terms of reading, writing and mastering encoding and decoding skills. This could also be extended to the digital, understanding literacy as the mastery of computers or software (Gee et al., 2001). Although this cognitive approach to literacy is one of the possible options to look into it, it does not provide all the answers to the digital social practices currently happening in out-of-school environments. I am interested in studying literacy as sociocultural practices dialectically linked to language mediated practices connected to the world, because it means that they can be understood and studied in the context of which they are part (Gee, 1990). I build on the work of Ito et al., (2010) discussed in Chapters Three and Four, as an example of ethnographic

sociocultural approach that values, studies and reflects on out-of-school literacy practices and identity construction in teenagers' media engagement.

The definition of literacy that I use in this study draws from the New Literacy Studies. I understand literacy not only as skill, but as action, a set of actions and transitions in which people use reading and writing and other multimodal ways of meaning (art, music, movement...) for personal and social purposes. Literacy is a social practice and depends on knowledge of social conventions. Therefore, there are multiple literacies, as different cultural groups have different ways of making meaning and position themselves in the world (Street, 1995). The definition also draws from the New London Group in that I recognize that literacy uses a multiplicity of communication channels and modes and it is cultural and linguistically diverse (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

From a personal point of view, I have always been captivated by technology and its relationship with education. My job up to 2016 when I moved to India consisted of teaching English for specific purposes to Master students and Doctorates, and training colleagues in the applications of technology for their teaching and classroom routines in a French university. Most of the mandatory research papers I wrote for the EdD dealt with technology, for example: on teachers' attitudes towards using new technologies for English L2, or on the students' use of two interactive dictionaries on long and short-term vocabulary acquisition. Finally, for my IFS (Institutional Focused Study) I carried out a study on postgraduate research students' perceptions of English (L2) implicit and explicit vocabulary learning with CALL. Therefore,

this thesis was for me the logical continuation of a study path in the field of technology and education, and a good opportunity to go a step further into these subjects. The fact that I have two teenage daughters that I could observe made me want to reflect on the relationship between their out-of-school digital practices and the ones taking place in school because of the important role these out-of-school practices seemed to play in their lives in relation to their digital literacies and identity construction. The ethnographic approach considers literacy not as a set of uniform 'technical skills' to be acquired, but rather as a plurality of literacies in communities of practice socially embedded (Street, 2016). Therefore, an ethnographic account of literacy looks into 'what literacy means to different populations of users, focusing on the cultural and institutional locations of such meaning using analytic induction' (ibid, p.5).

Parents are the first ones who notice that teenagers spend a lot of their free time online reading and creating written texts, combined with auditory, visual, oral and tactile representations to produce meaning. For many of these teenagers their computers, their phones or/and tablets are a way of making sense and expressing themselves. Kress (1997, p.167) stated almost 20 years ago that, 'life on the screen is an everyday natural practice (...) they know no other way of being'.

This evolving multiliterate online world, which is global, linguistically diverse and uses multimodal forms of expression and representation, and in which teenagers read and write at high speed using both hands and multitasking is disconcerting for some adults. Technologies such as mobile

media (smartphone and tablets that integrate multimedia) are primary tools for online connection for the participants in this study. How medium and mode seem to relate to affordances in social interactions and discourse patterns will be discussed in the findings in Chapter Four (Boyd, 2010) in relation to, for example, preferences of media such as WhatsApp or Instagram that may be facilitated by the different modes the participants use to express their literacy and construct their identity; that is the use of certain technology to achieve certain goals.

Current literacy practices and policies have changed due to the internet in many aspects, from the traditional print-based literacy to new ways of communication involving varied modes; from the manner in which we read a text, to the graphic designs of many learning resources, and from a traditional role of teaching and learning to a different role of teachers and learners in which knowledge is shared and constructed. The integration of photos, animations, sounds, video clips and other kinds of semiotic resources to communicate has without any doubt an impact on literacy. Furthermore, social media leaves room for new forms of interaction in which teenagers are able to develop their identities and carry on a variety of social acts through a variety of literacy practices (Davis, 2012). Young people are daily engaged with digital media, and easy access to the internet in countries such as France is not an issue, but studies like the one by Ito et al., (2010, p.31) draw attention to the way in which diverse social, technical and cultural contexts do structure youth media engagement and show that 'there are some fundamental changes taking place in the ways teenagers are communicating,

producing texts and distributing content’.

Many of these current multimodal literacy practices in teenagers take place in non-academic settings demanding researchers and teachers not only to take into account the students’ out-of-school experiences, interests, and ways of participation in social media, but drawing from them to build knowledge, to push boundaries from non-academic settings to academic ones (e.g. school), and therefore take new directions in research and classroom practices. My study aims to contribute to this debate by looking into how the social networking technologies used by two teenagers are weaved into their literacy and identity construction practices in order to extend literacy learning that takes place out of school in the way of self-learning and communities of practice to in-school settings. This study is significant in that it sees teenagers’ out-of-school digital literacy and identity construction practices as a sight of learning. Instead of building into what makes in and out-of-schools settings different, my study explores teenagers’ digital practices beyond classrooms to support these practices in-school settings in a way that they are not hostile to learning. I draw on theorising about literacy as multimodal, engaging multiple modes of expression to communicate meaning, and on literacy learning happening across contexts regardless the settings where it takes place. Digital literacy practices are being used by teenagers to connect with people all over the world, to create meaning or change it, to construct their identities, to share thoughts, ideas, opinions, and to look for information in an array of academic and non-academic matters. Facebook, for example, where one can meet new people,

develop relationships, perform group work, share notes, create discussion boards, carry on homework, etc. Twitter, where a 'specific language' is generated, with more than 37% of tweets being conversational, and 40,5% conversations without a goal specific purpose (See: <http://pearanalytics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Twitter-Study-August-2009.pdf>). Currently, a person who is literate forms his/her personality, world view and manner of social conduct, among other ways through tools for collaborating and managing information found on the web. Therefore, 'these dynamic multimodal and mobile practices are at odds with the tightly framed definitions of literacy that still dominate many educational contexts' (Burnett, & Merchant, 2015, p.272).

New digital literacies are a way to empower teenagers, to enable them to explore, socialize, learn, collaborate, and produce and create together. We cannot continue to close our eyes to a reality that is well established behind school doors (Ito et al., 2013). As Jenkins (2009) has emphasized education that recognizes the full impact of networked publics and digital media must also recognize a whole new way of looking at learning and teaching.

In this study I observed how my two daughters, as a small sample of the teenage population, actually practice literacies through their multiple forms of engagement and participation in social media, how this helps or hinders their identities, and how the 'sophisticated practices' that take place in out-of-school settings inform pedagogy. This is a study that aims at exploring beyond what some people describe as 'a waste of time' and I will add 'energy' from teenagers (Richtel, 2012). In this, I am in line with other scholars that

theorize that ‘multimodal, digital texts provide opportunities for language and literacy to function as living, relational and cultural artifacts that can be remade to welcome diverse linguistic and cultural voices’ (Domingo, 2012, p. 4). Technology has the potential to disrupt the boundaries between sites where learning takes place. It can empower learners through greater agency, opportunities to participate in networked communities, and provide access to a wide range of resources to support their knowledge building and collaboration. This study looks into literacy as a ubiquitous practice regardless the environments in which it takes place, without considering if it is bound to formal or informal learning settings, just learning.

1.1 Research Rationale

Literacy in this day and age is, in consequence, more than just reading and writing as a result of the multiple modes of meaning-making available. It is also something that is not only received but also created. According to Hobbs (1998, p.1) literacy is: ‘the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms’, but from a sociocultural perspective literacy is above all, ‘a matter of social practices’ (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 2001, p. 1). According to Scribner & Cole (1981, p. 236) it involves ‘applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use’. Literacy then in a digital context, becomes ‘a tool of meaning making for myriad social practices in which teenagers engage via digital codification’ (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008, p.5). The current study is grounded on the belief

that literacy is about performing social acts of meaning making mediated by multimodal practices, which vary according to context, and that it is used to construct and reflect adolescents' identity (Harter 1998). It is also in line with sociocultural learning theories on literacy that look to out-of-school settings for models of literacy learning and media engagement that are different from what is found in the classroom (Hull & Schultz, 2002; Ito et al., 2010; Mahiri, 2004; Rogoff, 2003).

In many European countries teenagers spend most of their free time at home online, because they have in general easier and unlimited access to the internet than at school (Arafeh et al., 2002; Lenhart, 2015), it is a convenient way of socialising with peers (Boyd, 2014), and a way to assist them with learning at home. These same teenagers, who are growing up in a digital age, use and interact with digital media in the context of their everyday literacy practices in and outside school settings. As a result, it makes sense to look into their digital literacy practices of everyday life.

A great number of studies have been confined to school literacy practices and their implications for teaching and learning. But other types of literacy practices that take place outside of school and which are used and developed in informal settings, through social media, fan fiction and gaming, and that look into teenagers' engagement in social communication and recreation beyond class time are now starting to be more explored because of their impact in learning and socialising (Boyd, 2014; Zenkov & Harmon, 2009; Ito et al., 2010; Stewart, 2014). Research into these literacy practices can therefore contribute to give a more comprehensive picture of what teenagers

as practitioners of literacy do (Heath, 1983; Schultz, 2002). However, literacy tends not to be an end in itself, it can also be a way of expressing identity. As evidenced by Alvermann et al., (2007), adolescents often use their out-of-school literacy practices to tell others who they are and how they define themselves. Luttrell & Parker (2001); Blummer (2008); as well as Buckingham (2008), have looked into the literacies of youth as ways of identity construction:

“Technology (...) is creating new competencies or forms of “literacy,” which require and produce new intellectual powers, and even “more complex brain structures.” It provides new ways of forming identity, and hence new forms of personhood; and by offering communication with different aspects of the self, it enables young people to relate to the world and to others in more powerful ways.

(Buckingham, 2008, p.14)

Growing up digital and seeking identity validation from friends and/or strangers, often via social media, spurs questions on researchers, teachers, and parents on how all this affects teenagers’ lives, their in and out-of-school practices, and in consequence their literacies and their identities. Technology facilitates the possibility of more *‘versions of self’* through multimodal literacies. In fact, in practising any form of literacy, the user is simultaneously enacting a particular consciously and explicitly constructed social role and membership in a particular group. In this study, I discuss how two young teenagers, my daughters, present their particular identities through the hybrid textual practices of their online communication. I look into how these practices are important contexts for them to engage in literacy and identity construction. As Young (2013) states, digital identity is reflected

through the self-expressions a person leaves over the digital world through online postings, photos, pages they like, etc.:

‘The online world requires people to write themselves into existence and so their profiles provide an opportunity to craft the intended impression through language, imagery and media.’

(Young, 2013, p.3)

Digital Identities do not necessarily have to be disconnected from the ones in the physical world as more recent research has indicated, and this is in fact, the way many teenagers feel, as they often choose to participate and enact their identities in ways that are congruent with who they are offline (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ito et al. 2010; Thomas, 2007). Subrahmanyam & Greenfield (2008), and Holloway & Valentine, (2003) along similar lines, state that the physical and virtual worlds are psychologically connected and mutually constituted. In that way, the virtual world serves as playground for developmental issues from the physical world such as identity construction and expression. Turkle (1996) and Rowsell & Abrams (2011), describe digital media as a laboratory for exploring and experimenting with different versions of ‘*self*’, as the uses and interactions of adolescents with technology provide virtual spaces for experimentation with multimodal language as well as with identity. Young (2009, p.46) states that ‘98% of online friends are known persons’ which makes difficult to present oneself other than in a real, although idealised way.

Digital identities are complex compounds subject to change, context-dependent and linked to the variable practices and resources of specific settings (Norton & Toohey, 2011). They can include specific information (real

or not) about personal characteristics (age, hobbies, music they like, favourite sites etc.); or implicitly be linked to social identities, such as peer group membership or online behaviour (postings, conversations, tagging...). They are aspects of a person's identity interacting in different ways with other elements (Nabeth, 2006). For example, Calvert (2002) points out that the anonymity youth have within virtual worlds allows them more flexibility in exploring their identity through language, images, role-play, and the personae they assume. Burke (2013, p.32) states that: 'only by exploring online interactions we can more fully understand identity construction'. Understanding how the digital world affects adolescents' identity construction and ways of expression requires then examining adolescents' self-presentation through new media.

All these practices are happening in great number in the free time our children spend outside school, not in school, at least not for the time being. Students' literacy engagements outside school often differ significantly from their engagements with the traditional texts typically used in standard school curricula (Burke & Hammett, 2009). Therefore, as Considine, Horton, & Moorman (2009) contend:

'The challenge for teachers (and for all those concerned with education) is to connect the literacy skills that students develop in their social environment with the literacy environment of the school'.

(Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009, p. 486)

Especially, as research supports the fact that a great number of teachers struggle to employ these '*new forms of literacy*' effectively in their classrooms (Hagood et al., 2008; Yeo, 2007).

1.2 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study are: (1) to present a picture of the out-of-school multiliteracy and multimodal practices of two teenagers, (2) to examine how they make use their out-of-school digital literacy practices for identity issues, (3) to provide insights into how these literacy and identity construction practices could be used for educational purposes by examining possible relationships between academic and out-of-school literacy practices.

In this study, my daughters' experiences serve as an example of multilingual, multimodal, and multicultural young people's out-of-school literacies, and ways of constructing a variety of identities for a variety of roles (learning, friendship, power, etc.) in the diverse social situations in which they interact. I explore the ways in which they engage in multiple forms of literacy online, which may include the use of the internet, social media, instant messaging, and texting. All these practices can be used as tools for literacy and identity by forming social relationships and understanding academic content as well (Ito et al., 2010).

As a researcher, I engage in this opportunity to look into these kinds of digital practices in action guided by my research questions with the intention to contribute to the field of literacy. As a teacher, I would like to observe the implications of teenagers' informal digital uses for learning, because learning

is at the crossroads of the impact of technology, and because formal education institutions need to think about how to respond to these new literacy realities and the role they are to play. Media and online ways of communication are important in youth's lives, are part of their culture, and are here to stay. Finally, as a parent I am curious to learn more about what my daughters are doing online in their free time and the implications for them as learners and human beings. Today's teenage reality is something that is very different from previous times, and these changes have necessarily an influence on education and socialization. Buckingham, (2008, pp. 13-14) discusses the concept of a 'digital generation' and the existence of a generational gap based on Tapscott's (1998) technological determinism:

'For many kids, using the new technology is as natural as breathing. Technology is the means of their empowerment. From this perspective, technology is seen to have brought about fundamental changes in a whole range of areas. It has created new styles of communication and interaction, and new means for constructing community. It has produced new styles of playful learning, which go beyond the teacher-dominated, authoritarian approach of old style education. It is creating new competencies or forms of literacy, which require and produce new intellectual powers, and even more complex brain structures. It provides new ways of forming identity, and hence new forms of personhood; and by offering communication with different aspects of the self, it enables young people to relate to the world and to others in more powerful ways.'

(Tapscott 1998, p.40)

Although I do not agree with every aspect of Tapscott's technological determinism in the sense that I do not see technology as some kind of technological praxis which determines subjects, but instead I acknowledge the centrality of social processes. As Buckingham (2006, p.4) notes, refining

the study of media audiences with a generational perspective usually means focusing on the 'potential role of media and technology in construction and self-construction of generations'. In addition to the term '*generational divide*', these new technology practices are tied to what Buckingham (Ibid) describes as a '*digital divide*' between in-school and out-of-school uses. In line with this, I believe that we have the responsibility to address the realities of children's lives outside school, which self-evidently includes their engagement with popular culture, and their leisure uses of technology, and ultimately how these relate to education. We can observe how young people use media in-school and out-of-school and realize that there is a difference between both these spheres despite the fact that the technology they use is the same. On the other hand, technology has undeniably reorganized how we live, how we communicate, and how we learn, and formal education no longer comprises the majority of young people's learning. Learning now occurs in a variety of ways – through communities of practice, personal networks: 'know-how' and 'know-what' are being supplemented with 'know-where', the understanding of where and how to find the knowledge and information needed. For example, in describing learning in relation to simulation games, Gee (2008) suggests that kids also pick up academic content and skills as part of their play. Sefton-Green (2004) has argued in his literature review *Informal Learning with Technology Outside School* that educators must recognize that much of young people's learning with information and communication technologies do happen outside of school:

'This recognition requires us to acknowledge a wider 'ecology' of education where schools, homes, playtime, and library and the museum all play their part. By focusing on recreational and social

media engagement in the everyday contexts of family and peer interaction, we fill out the picture of the range of environments in which youth learn with new media and prioritize those social contexts that youth find most meaningful and motivational’.

(Sefton-Green, 2004, p.3)

According to the 2015 Ofcom report, which highlights the roles that media literacy plays in people’s daily lives, the volume of internet use per week in 2014 at home in the range age of 16-24 was already increasing and accounted for 12.6 hours of the 20.5 total weekly internet use per week (Ofcom, 2015, p.61). The same report (p.65) states that the 16-24 years old internet users were more likely than average to undertake a number of online activities such as: communication (94% vs. 88%), general surfing / browsing (93% vs. 86%), social media (90% vs. 66%), entertainment (78% vs. 59%), work/ studies information (66% vs. 50%) and leisure information (45% vs. 30%). Three years later, the trend continues to increase (Ofcom report 2017, pp. 37-42), confirming today’s scene. Lotherington & Ronda (2014) summarise the changes that have been taken place:

‘Arguably the most salient social shift of the past three decades has been *digitization*. The rapid expansion of digital technologies into social, economic, and cultural life has indelibly transformed communication practices. Revolutionary changes in communications media have wrought new tools and environments for communicating, which have, in turn, spawned new discourses, textual forms, and communities. The expansion of global digital networks together with the emergence of pocket-sized computer devices has enabled the individual to communicate across a global playing field of media access, production, and dissemination. Virtual ontologies have developed in cyberspace where people are involved in massively multiplayer worlds (...), providing new identities and cultures of digital activity’.

(Lotherington & Ronda, 2014, p.14)

In conclusion, in order to understand these forms of practice that seem to be a fundamental part in teenagers' lives, that educational theory encourages taking advantage of, and that the work market is hungry for (House of Commons, 2016 report: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmbis/87/87.pdf>), studies like the current one need to be undertaken to inform educational practice and foster real transformational change, providing youth with the kind of intellectual dispositions and skills that this pattern of cultural change involves (Crook et al., 2008; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). We need to take into account an individual's media engagement as well as the properties of social groups and cultural identities in which they evolve, and to be mindful of what structures they are influenced by, such as socioeconomic status of users, accessibility to certain technologies or devices used (Pachler, Bachmair & Cook, 2010) to provide an ethnographic account of shared praxis that structures youth media participation in general. Therefore, the interest should be placed on the digital literacy needs and the motivations of teenagers whose main socialisation goal is the development of their own identities (cf. Buckingham 2008; Jenkins 2006).

The present study seeks to make a contribution to educational research by exploring and critically discussing the out-of-school practices of two of these teenagers, their multiliteracy practices and the way in which these are used to express their identities in order to understand them, and eventually take advantage for educational purposes.

Researches, such as Purcell-Gates (2007) or Sefton-Green (2004) have been studying literacy within home communities and taking into account what can

be learnt from what children are already doing at home. In the same way, significant aspects about literacy, and how it is conveyed for identity issues can be learnt from what adolescents are doing in their everyday out-of-school literacy practices.

1.3 Research Context

This research employs a case study situated in the everyday lives and multiliteracy practices at home of two multilingual teenage girls, who were 15 and 17 when data collection began. The participants were selected because it was felt they could offer unique insight into what shapes the online multiliteracy practices and identity construction in their particular setting. These two teenagers lived in an 'upper middle-class' environment and attended an elite multilingual international school in the suburbs of Paris. Data collection took place during 6 months at their home in France, 1 month in India, after the family moved there in 2016, and online in Holland where the eldest participant went to university during part of the data collection period. I use the term 'upper middle-class' in this study to refer to the economic, social and cultural backgrounds of the participants in keeping with Bourdieu's (1986) concepts of capital, field and habitus. According to Bourdieu the participants' way of speaking about the world structures the way they see it, and vice versa, implying that this research is not context free but that it comes saturated with values that can shape it. In terms of socio-economic stratification, the term is used here following a classification in *Le Figaro* (2014): <http://www.lefigaro.fr/social/2014/04/16/09010->

20140416ARTFIG00110-tes-vous-riche-pauvre-ou-appartenez-vous-a-la-classe-moyenne.php. But there may be also other factors to be taken into

consideration, such as the cultural capital: the participants' parents level of education, the access to elite schools, travelling and extra curriculum activities which are part of the social background and that may have also an influence on teenagers' interests and practices. Within the context of this research the participants' social class status was primarily determined using the parents' education attainment (Van Galen, 2000) and the parents' employment (Tokarczyk & Fay, 1993).

The participants lived in a house where they had their own rooms. They both own a laptop or a computer for personal use and had access to a big screen with a Wii and a play station in the living room. The family enjoyed a subscription to Netflix for multiple users and the internet connection was fiber with a speed of 100 Mbps. Each participant owned their own smart phone and the family had at its disposal a range of devices. Family holidays took place 3 to 4 times a year and included skiing, travelling abroad, language summer camps or visiting family members in other countries.

The participants were enrolled in a variety of extra curricula activities such as piano lessons, Russian for the elder participant, horse riding for both participants, and soccer and tennis at school. The parents had both a high level of education and spoke several languages. Both parents worked in senior professional roles. In addition to their family home they had access to a holiday home and could readily visit friends and family abroad. The elder

participant attended the Spanish section at the international school and the youngest participant was in the American section.

Although I do not address in this study multiliteracy and identity construction practices from a social class, race or gender division perspective, I acknowledge that these factors may have an influence according to the specific economic and cultural capital of the participants. The *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1986) are the skills, tastes, postures, material belongings, credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class and by sharing similar forms of cultural capital with others helping to create a sense of collective identity and group position. The physical embodiment of this cultural capital is the *habitus*, the beliefs and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences and that allow us to successfully navigate social environments or *fields*. Habitus is thus influenced by the social, cultural and economic circumstances to which an individual is exposed. If *habitus* represents the internalized understanding of the 'rules of the game', the *field* represents the social space where the rules of the game apply (Horvat, 2003).

Therefore, the digital multiliteracy uses of the participants in this study can be influenced by their particular cultural and social capital and material constraints (Ball, Davis, David & Reay, 2002). The observation and description of the digital multiliteracy practices that the participants in this study employ on the Internet and some SNSs and how these are put to use for identity construction are related to how they may express the development of personal interests, relationships and autonomy according to

their particular cultural capital. I acknowledge the fact that participants in this study enjoy an economic and cultural capital that allows high speed connection to the Internet, the use of different kinds of devices (iPad, laptop and smartphones) and cultural opportunities, and therefore this can shape their digital practices compared to other teenagers who do not share the same capital. Micheli (2015) for example, indicates in her study that upper-middle-class students attending *licei* replicate their parents' stance toward the Internet as a tool for personal enrichment. By contrast, teens attending vocational school engage with digital media as a form of peer-oriented leisure. Her work suggests the importance of the role of the family cultural and economic capital. I understand literacy as a sociocultural practice, therefore, as Bourdieu remind us:

The experience of the world that is taken for granted presupposes the agreement between the dispositions of the agents and the expectations or demands in a world in which they are inserted.

(Bourdieu 2000, p. 147)

1.4 Significance of the Study

There is an interest in adolescents' literacies linked to social practices that involves reading and writing as well as other modes of communication in which young people engage. These practices are part of larger conversations in different fields, for example Thomas et al., (2007) in transliteracy from a unifying perspective on what it means to be literate in the 21st century. Literacy practices associated with the internet (blogging, instant messaging,

social networking, etc.) are topics of research papers, conferences, formal and informal discussions in and outside academic settings. Yet, practitioners do not necessarily grasp the implications these online literacies may have for teenagers in their middle and high school years regarding these practices and how they may contribute to their identity construction. A study like the present one can help to push the boundaries of theory and sensitise scholars of possible new directions in research into the digital literacy and identity fields. For instance, what are the reasons that drive young people to create content online, or the degree of implications teenagers' online literacies have for the research and teaching of literacy itself? These same teenagers are editing and mixing multimodal content they find online to share interests and goals with others and rewriting their social identities to show who they are. The challenge of bringing together '*classic*' literacy forms and digital ones requires a rethinking of their relationship in all kinds of settings. I do not think we can continue to set borders and limitations between what students are or do out of school. We need to look into the ways in which these practices can be related to in-school practices. Although in the present study I do not pay attention to school settings but to digital literacy and identity construction practices that teenagers experience at home in their leisure time, I do, nevertheless, relate the kinds of out-of-school multiliteracy practices to the ways in which they can be taken advantage of to raise awareness and ultimately contribute to learning in school-based literacy environments.

Therefore, the present study aims are:

- To contribute to the literature by providing an accurate and comprehensive description of two teenagers' out-of-school multiliteracy practices and digital identities, thereby offering an account of the nature of what their practices are.
- To explore and describe the kinds of relationships, if any, between in and out-of-school literacy practices may help to connect or understand better in and out-of-school literacies: 'literacy learning for school and literacy learning for lives' (Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000, p.1).
- To delve into teenagers' identity construction through the process of 'on-going design and redesign of identities across the social and cultural practices of their meaning making' (Jewitt, 2008, p. 260) so that researchers, educators and parents can pinpoint the essence of current teenagers' digital involvement.

Kurek & Hauck (2014, p. 122) acknowledge that after The New London Group published in 1996 their milestone manifesto *A pedagogy of multiliteracies*, the shift from print to screen has been unfolding with accelerating speed and with a profound impact on how we think, make meaning, communicate, create social bonds, and learn. The massive scale of these changes has affected individual cognition, sociocultural practices and interpersonal relations and has been widely discussed in the literature (Carr, 2011; Cope &

Kalantzis, 2000; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Pegrum, 2010; Reinhardt & Thorne, 2011; Selber, 2004). This is another reason why this study may be also of interest to those who relate to teenagers in different ways, such as parents, teachers, education policy makers, curriculum designers, materials developers, or even teenagers themselves, in order to find ways to support and guide their digital literacy practices outside and inside school by having a more precise picture of what teenagers do. In sum, young people's creation of content for online sharing amounts to more than simply producing and distributing their texts; in one sense, they are forcing to push the boundaries of classroom practice and research.

The following section summarizes several personal opinions and participants' stances on literacy, and identity that guided this study.

1.5 Personal Stance

(1) Literacy is understood in this study from a sociological perspective, and as sociocultural practice.

(2) Participants can identify and discuss their literacy activities that take place in and out-of-school settings.

(3) Participants can reflect upon their previous experiences with multimodal and multilanguage literacy practices.

(4) Participants are aware of their digital identities and of the ways they express them.

(5) Participants engage, to some extent, in literacy activities outside school.

(6) Literacy is important in teenagers' identity construction in in and out-of-school settings and practices.

(7) Digital identity construction includes online self-presentations that are carefully thought and selected.

(8) Literacy and identity can be expressed in a variety of multimodal ways of making meaning for a variety of purposes.

(9) Literate ability now consists of facility with composing, interpreting, and transforming information and knowledge across various forms of representation.

(10) My definition of literacy recognises cultural and linguistic variety within communities of practice and values the out-of-school literacy practices.

1.6 International Dimension of the Study

Education at the present time is not constrained to the national level. It is certain that each country has its own specificities and curriculum in education, but digital literacy and identity are universal concepts and practices, regardless the language or the social environment in which teenagers develop to face a globalised world market. A person can be born in France, study in India or the Netherlands, spend a few years in Spain and work in Taiwan or South America. S/he can even live in the remotest village anywhere and connect with other people all over the world giving that there is an internet connection. S/he can turn into a different person on line, change sex, age or social status. My point is that the boundaries of the 'real world' as

we have known it before the digital era do not have anything to do with the world's reality now.

For teenagers, this digital world is as real and tangible as the physical one, and in a way, it is what makes sense for them. Changes then have erased borders and globalisation has impacted on youth cultural practices (Maira, 2004), created technological changes (Turkle, 2004), and influenced teenagers' identity construction (Levitt & Waters, 2002). Globalisation has generated transnational practices that have undeniable roles to play in teenage literacy, identity and new media cultures. New technologies and media help to build transnational social networks that cross boundaries between states and help teenagers to build their identities and reflect it through their digital literacy uses. Globalisation is understood in this study as:

‘A set of processes that tend to de-territorialize important economic, social, and cultural practices from their traditional boundaries in nation states.’

(Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hillard, 2004, p.14)

Kinder (1991, p.3) defines ‘transmedia intertextuality’ as the conglomeration of interconnected texts across modes and media. Within these discursive repertoires, which are often tied to global commercial corporations, children actively construct and reconstruct their sense of self and identity (Hughes & Macnaughton, 2001). This calls for a problematising of the ideological effects of the hybridized textual environment, and nuanced accounts of everyday

and school-based literacy practices within the social conditions of globalization (Makin & Whiteman, 2007).

Since the 1950's, international organizations like UNESCO have been fostering discussion, and playing a role in developing international policies on literacy. In 2002 the United Nations declared the years 2003 to 2012 the '*United Nations Literacy Decade*'. Resolution 56/116 acknowledged the place of literacy at the heart of lifelong learning, affirming that:

'Literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century'.

(United Nations, 2002)

The Resolution also embraces the social dimension of literacy in that it provides the tools for eradicating poverty, population growth, diminishing child mortality, promoting gender equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy. This conception of literacy goes beyond reading and writing in one's own language, it is intimately tied to peoples' views of themselves, others, and the world around them. Literacy is part of a larger discourse, which is a way of being and part of one's identity also (Gee, 1990).

A study like the present one recognises this reality and aims at studying how we as researchers, educators, and parents can make the most of it. Is there really a divide in practices between in and out-of-school settings for teenagers or is it an artificial construct that we impose upon ourselves to try

to meet half way with this new reality and deal with the new demands of the digital era? This study seeks to open doors and advocate for social change by widening research boundaries from academic to non-academic contexts, and by observing what is universally taking place on the net in literacy and identity construction regardless nationalities or national borders. What can be more international than what is now happening on a daily basis online?

1.7 Order and Overview of Chapters

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter broadly signals the parameters of this research by identifying gaps in practical and theoretical terms. It situates the study in a particular context, sets out the rationale for the study, and defines several crucial concepts and terms of the research. In the following chapter (Chapter Two), I review the pertinent literature that encompasses the theories and research related to multiliteracies, multimodality in out-of-school practices, and digital identity construction in teenagers. Chapter Three, examines the case study as a methodological approach and discusses the specific methods and techniques employed to collect, analyse, and interpret the data. Also, I elaborate on my role as a parent as a researcher (PAR) and the relationships with my daughters regarding anonymity and confidentiality. Next, Chapter Four discusses the findings and the discussion on main themes from the out-of-school multiliteracy practices and identity issues in which my daughters engaged for over a period of 6 months in France and 1 month in India and Holland respectively, and enables the development of some sense of the complexity, uniqueness, and richness of these literacy practices and its connections with identity construction. This

chapter is also devoted to creating individual portraits and rich accounts of their digital literacy practices, and the relationship between the diverse literacy modes, and their different communicative impact on literacy issues and identity construction. I discuss the findings in this study while situating my research within the larger field of multiliteracy and identity studies. At the end, in Chapter Five, I suggest pedagogical implications, implications for professional practice, policy, limitations, future research possibilities for both classroom and out-of-school literacy practices. I include also comments on possible dissemination channels and personal outcome.

1.8 Summary

In Chapter One I have tried to reason the importance of out-of-school literacies, and digital identities in teenagers' lives. I have also explained the rationale for my own study. The first-hand opportunity to observe the daily practices of two of these adolescents in action in a non-academic setting was a challenge for me as a researcher, a teacher and a parent. I chose to do research on my own children as I could observe them at home in a natural way, because one of the drawbacks in researching out-of-school practices is the difficulty in gaining access and in observing participants in natural settings. I acknowledge that positioning myself as a participant parent researcher raises methodological issues, which I problematize but which are not the subject of my research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

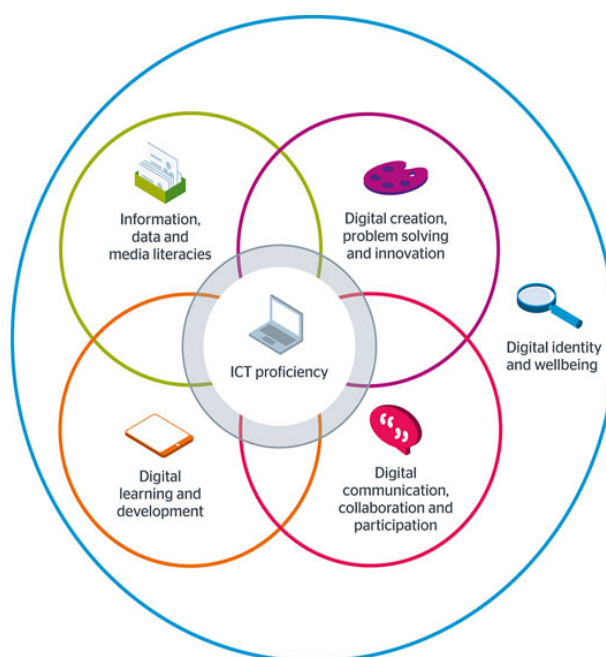
2.0 Introduction

In order to demonstrate how this study connects to the previous work in the field of digital literacy and identity construction from a sociocultural approach, I reviewed a number of studies and scholars that have investigated a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives of multiliteracies, multimodality and digital identity in teenagers in out-of-school environments. In the literature review, I start by addressing my choice of the term 'multiliteracies', to situate myself into the sociocultural perspective (1). I continue discussing a number of significant issues regarding multimodality, digital identities and how these are linked to multiliteracies (2). Finally, I tackle multiliteracies and digital identities in the participants' out-of-school literacy practices context (3). This review serves as a contextual framework of reference for my investigation of the digital literacy practices of two adolescents, my two daughters, and their identity construction. More specifically, this section is an important foundation for collecting, analysing, and interpreting the data gathered in the analysis and discussion chapter.

When I first started reviewing the literature in the field, I was confused by the proliferation of terms related to digital literacy. The term can be used to refer to the many abilities needed to work with digital tools, and to the skills to engage actively with a digital environment, but also to a broader conception of literacy such as the 'capabilities for living, learning, and working in a digital society'. Being literate in a digital environment can mean

a varied array of things, from knowing how to deal with information and data literacies, being able to create digitally and solve problems, communicating and collaborating online in digital communities of practice, to fostering digital learning and development, all of these interacting and contributing to one's proficiency and digital identity (Jisc, 2015): <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/developing-students-digital-literacy>. Figure 2.1, pictures the many aspects involved in developing learners' digital literacy being ICT proficiency one of them:

Figure 2.1: ICT Proficiency in Digital Literacy



Therefore, my first aim was to position myself as a researcher and my understandings of digital literacy to position my study in the field.

On the other hand, I was concerned with the developmental stage at which my daughters were, as different studies suggest that adolescence is a very important period in identity construction (Klimstra, et al., 2010), and that the exploration of identity is hinted to be the primary means by which we achieve it (Schmitt, Dayanim, & Matthias, 2008).

According to McKenna & Bargh (1999, p.2), 'people are turning to the internet to meet important social and psychological needs'. As a result, it seems that expressing identity is a strong self-motivator for using the Net. Adolescents are doing this in multiple ways and modes, the expression of self is not only carried on by what they write or read, but also by pictures, emoticons, visual interactions, social networks, and membership in social groups in which they participate. Martin & Nakayama (2010) observed that identity is created in part by the self and in part by relation to group membership, mainly in the way of feedback from others. Goode (2010, p. 502) similarly views identity as 'a product of participation in communities of practice'.

Finally, as a teacher, the interest in these subjects was not only driven by the personal relation with my daughters and the fact of being a parent, but also from the urge to explore the connections or disconnections between teenagers' digital out-of-school practices, in particular what they are doing at home, and their practices in more academic environments. As 21st century teachers, we want our learners to become successful critical thinkers in a globalised context, with the ability to interact in diverse cultural and social environments by using multiple literacy modes. This pedagogical approach

involves learning that is grounded in students' own life experiences either in-school or out-of-school settings and it is the main rationale for my own study. By knowing more about teenagers' digital literacy practices at home and its relationship with identity construction I am hoping to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in digital literacy studies.

2.1 Sociocultural Perspectives of Literacy: New Literacies, Multiliteracies and Multimodality

2.1.0 Introduction

The New London Group (1996) developed the term '*multiliteracies*' to respond to the different realities about literacy that exist in education. The concept derived from theories of literacy as social practice, therefore, is built on the assumption that 'an understanding of literacy requires detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings emphasizing the real-world contexts in which people use literacy' (Street, 2001, p.430). The New London Group (NLG) suggested that this alternative new way of understanding literacy had to include the diverse cultural and linguistic varieties within communities around the world, and also the many multimodal ways of meaning making. It focuses, in a word on the demands placed on people in changing environments:

'Multiliteracies pay attention to the multiplicity of communication channels and media and to cultural and linguistic diversity'.

(Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p.5)

Sociocultural perspectives of literacy are related to sociolinguistic conceptualisations of language that see literacy as a social practice, in consequence language always comes fully attached to 'other stuff' and literacy therefore reflects all of this 'other stuff' (Gee, 1996, 2000; Halliday, 1973; Enciso & Moje, 2007; Tracey & Morrow, 2012). According to Halliday (1973), for instance, culture is realised through language, it always happens within a social context and it is shaped by it. Street (1995) suggested that literacies carry meaning primarily through their involvement with cultural values in communities of practice. This new approach to literacy contrasts with many of the literacy policies and programs shaped in the past by cognitive and psycholinguistic perspectives that focused on the development of particular skills like phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension (Muth & Perry, 2010; Pearson & Hiebert, 2010). Literacy has moved from making reference to the specific practices associated with text to a more generalized capacity to decipher the signs and symbols of our culture. The understanding of literacy as a situated social practice constitutes the basis for other theories within the broad generic term of sociocultural theories.

The point of departure of this study is the belief that, currently, in everyday contexts, literacy involves much more than a set of conventions to be learnt in order to be able to write and read. It enables people to negotiate meaning, with these negotiations often occurring in technological settings and engaging teenagers' values and identities (Leland & Kasten, 2002; Jewitt, 2008). Therefore, in the following section I describe the New Literacy Studies

and Multiliteracies to engage with the theoretical model of literacy as a social practice that they introduced.

2.1.1 The New Literacy Studies (NLS)

Before the 70's literacy was identified with the way an individual learned to encode, decode and understand a printed set of signs, that meant a fix and individual system with clear boundaries taught mainly at school (Bawden, 2008). This conception implied that literacy 'was assumed to be a set of neutral, decontextualized skills that could be applied to any situation' (Perry 2012, p.53). In contrast, the 'new' conception of literacy initiated by the New Literacy Studies conceptualised it as 'a set of practices (as opposed to skills) linked to cultural and power structures in society' (Street, 1985, p.433). Literacy extends to include the cognitive processes, the social practices around reading and writing, and the 'socially recognised ways in which people generate, communicate and negotiate meanings, as members of Discourses, through the medium of encoded texts' (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p.33). This entailed the recognition of multiple literacies that varied from one context to another.

In the 1980s NLS spurred a wave of interest in literacy studies from different perspectives that came from anthropology, sociology, semiotics, ethnographic linguistics (Hymes), and psychology studies (Vygotsky), and brought a new way of looking at literacy. The term 'NLS' proposed by Gee (1990, p.49), and adopted later by Street (1993), supposed a break through

to challenge the understanding of literacy as merely something static, general and abstract. NLS scholars working within this tradition (e.g., Alvermann, 2008; Gregory & Williams, 2000; Hagood, 2002; Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007, Luke, 2003; Purcell-Gates, 2007) relate to a line of literacy research that is centred on understanding how social interactions, diverse cultural practices, and learning contexts inform and shape reading and writing in a range of technical platforms and modalities:

‘What has come to be termed the “New Literacy Studies” (NLS) represents a new tradition in considering the nature of literacy, focusing not so much on acquisition of skills (...), but rather on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice’.

(Street, 2003, p. 77)

These ‘new’ literacies made possible in part by digital technology developments relate to a wide variety of perspectives on literacy in general and on literacy education in particular that promote a shared understanding of literacy nested within social context (Street, 1994), a socialized construction of something more than exclusively reading and writing: ‘a repertoire of changing practices for communicating purposefully in multiple social and cultural contexts’ (Mills, 2010, p. 247).

Scholars within the NLS have specifically paid attention to the innovative and productive ways of literacy practices in digital contexts, in and out-of-school settings, and have applied social and cultural understandings of literacy across a panoply of digital contexts of use (Mills, 2010; Gee, 1996, 2003; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Nixon, 2003; Sefton-Green, 2006; Street, 2003). NLS key thinkers, (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Gee 2004, 2007; Gutiérrez

& Rogoff, 2003; Janks, 2010; Kress, 2003; Lankshear, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, 2007; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Stein 2008), argue that the meanings to which new technologies give rise are determined by the social, cultural, historical, and institutional practices of different groups of people, and these practices almost always involve more than just using a digital tool—they involve, as well, ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, and knowing, as well as often using other sorts of tools and technologies, including very often oral and written language. Literacy then in a digital context, becomes ‘a tool of meaning making for myriad social practices in which teenagers engage via digital codification’ (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008, p.5). The work of NLS scholars translated in a series of renewed beliefs about literacy education and drew attention to more research in non-academic environments such as homes and communities (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005); less emphasis on cognitive development and more on cultural practices (Gee, 1996); more interest in the relations between identity and literacy (Gee, 1999), and an expansion of definitions of what constitutes literacy modes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Examples of NLS may include researching practices such as instant messaging, blogging, creating and maintaining a website, participating in online social media, curating and sharing music, videos, pod castings, photo sharing, emailing, digital storytelling, online discussions, online chats, participating in fan fiction, wikis, processing and evaluating online information, using Google, etc. (Coiro, 2003; Gee, 2007; Hunter, 2014; Jenkins, 2006; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Lessig, 2005; Leu, et al., 2013; Prensky, 2006).

Although the NLS has had a fruitful impact on literacy studies by turning away from psycholinguistic processes in literacy and into literacy in its social contexts (Brumfit, 1992), one of the main criticisms towards it comes from the very definition of literacy. The NLS presented literacy as ‘a set of social practices within the context of a specific community intertwined with the values and beliefs of that community and with contemporary ways of being’ (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000, p.95) but this definition seemed too vague because it did not indicate clearly where to draw the line on what constitutes literacy in a changing environment. The outcome of this is the difficulty in transferring NLS’ theoretical perspectives to educational applications and policy:

‘We still, then, need to analyse and contest what counts as “literacy”, what literacy events and practices mean to users in different cultural and social contexts-- the original inspiration for NLS - but also what are the “limits of the local”, and how literacy relates to more general issues of social theory regarding textuality, figured worlds, identity and power’.

Street (2003, p. 87)

2.1.2 Multiliteracies

In 1996 a group of scholars met in New London USA during a year to discuss about the social context of literacy learning, they called themselves the ‘New London Group’ in relation to the place where they met. Like the NLS they understood literacy as something more than a set of skills and developed a theory that emphasized ‘the real-world contexts in which people practice literacy’ (Perry, 2012, p. 58). According to the group, there was a need to address the multiplicity or multimodality of communication channels tied to

new technologies and literacy, as well as a need to answer to cultural and linguistic diversity derived from migration and globalisation. They coined the term 'multiliteracies' (NLG, 1996, p. 61), and the concept was then developed in response to the question of a broader definition of literacy concerned with what it meant to be literate in a continuously evolving environment with diverse meaning making ways, social media, cultural and linguistic diversity, and a wide variety of resources to choose from (Cazden et al., 1996; Jewitt, 2008; NLG, 1996). Consequently, the concept of multiliteracies influenced a different kind of pedagogy, 'one in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their various cultural purposes' (NLG, 1996, p. 64).

It made sense for me in this study, to adopt the 'multiliteracy' approach above all the other sociocultural theoretical perspectives used in the literature to address the realities of increasing local diversity, globalisation, multiculturalism and multilingualism to describe the impact of technology in teenagers' literacy practices and identity construction:

'Dealing with linguistic differences and cultural differences has now become central to the pragmatics of our working, civic, and private lives'.

(NLG, 1996, p. 64)

The practices that teenagers are involved with in digital environments are profoundly integrated into their multiple sociocultural identities and depend on context (Gee, 2001). Multiliteracies recognises the multiplicity of literacy

practices of teenagers' lives, which shift with contexts, multimodal texts and identities (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Burn, 2009; Belshaw, 2012; Littlejohn, Beetham et al., 2012). Adopting a multiliteracy perspective entails in my opinion, a broadening of the scope on what literacy is because it leaves room for the diverse, changing and multimodal contexts of communication practiced in teenagers' world. This idea of new forms of literacy associated with emerging multimedia, is also theoretically based on a sociocultural tradition, which envisages literacy as a series of social practices resulting from events and mediated by texts and images, videos, music, gestures, etc., (Harste, 2003; Jones & Hafner, 2012) and identity as 'personal and social bricolage' (Weber & Mitchell, 2008, p.43). Multiliteracy is the field that takes account of 'how individuals make meaning with different kinds of modes' (Roswell & Walsh, 2011, p. 55). Meanings are, therefore grounded in real world patterns of experience, action and subjective interest (Gee, 2004; Gee, 2006), and 'text' becomes more than just printed text. The recognition of literacy as social practice is necessarily bound in multilateralism to link teenagers' literacy practices outside school to those inside school. Multiliteracy involves a view of youth as operating with communicational webs that are often unfamiliar to teachers (Kress, 2000). This theory is also intimately linked to instructional implications because:

'Only through a pedagogy of multilateralism can literacy education raise critical consciousness and ultimately transform practice'.

(Perry, 2012, p. 59)

To be multiliterate teenagers need meaningful purposes for engaging in diverse literacy practices and opportunities to use literacy for a wide range of activities that are related to academic matters, but also to personal aims in everyday life. In fact, many of the research in multiliteracies demonstrate teenagers' deep engagement in activities that are not linked exclusively to school. Research also indicates that one of the main reasons to produce multimodal texts online is to start or continue conversations with friends. For example, out-of-school contexts (Ito et al., 2008; Yi, 2008), afterschool settings (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux, & Tuzun, 2005; Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2014; Lam, 2004), and connections between literacy practice across home and school settings (Bulfin & North, 2007; Pahl, 2001).

A quick look at teenagers' textual practices shows also their involvement in multimodal texts that is, when words are used in combination with visual, audio, spatial, and gestural modes. Because of the potential provided by these online textual practices, it becomes important to examine how teenagers are constructing and articulating identities through the uses of multiliteracies. Skinner & Hagood, (2008, p.1) acknowledge that 'research on children and adolescents' new literacy practices in this setting has shown that they read and utilize texts using sophisticated literacy competencies'. These literacies involve engagements such as those with popular culture (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Vasquez & Smith 2003; Dyson, 2003; Ranker, 2007), using visual and digital technologies (Bitz, 2007), instant messaging (Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Lee, 2007), writing multimedia stories (Rojas-Drummond, Albarran, & Littleton, 2008), remixing (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), and

participating in online social networks (Witte, 2007). All these studies inform teachers, policy makers, and parents of practices that are common for teenagers across a variety of social status and countries, and emphasise different degrees of investment, such as more friendship-driven, interest-driven, or geeking out literacy practices. In line with these studies, I pay attention to some of the digital multiliteracy practices used by my teenage daughters in the out-of-school environment of their home and the ways in which these practices inform identity and may articulate to educational purposes.

Among the multiple definitions of literacies that I have come across in the literature I have consequently taken into consideration the ones that provide meaning within my theoretical conception of literacy as multiple and multimodal social practices. This study views literacy as the result of language as communication acts driven by a need to interact in a social environment, it pays attention to the semiotics of language. Other definitions of literacy take into account the cognitive dimension of the processes implied in communication and these processes, which are of interest for learning and explaining interactions from a different perspective, can offer other understandings of literacy. In studying literacies as social practice my study draws the attention to the specific cultural, political, economic, and historical practices of which they are part.

Lankshear & Knobel (2003, p.33), for example, define literacy as the 'social recognised ways in which people generate, communicate and negotiate meanings as members of 'Discourses', through the medium of encoded texts'.

Being a member of *Discourses* with capital 'D' means to be part of the social grouping that shares patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that are tied directly to their identity as a group (Gee, 1990). To be in a Discourse, your view of your own identity must see you as a member of that Discourse. While sociolinguistics have used the term '*discourse*' to refer to verbal interactions between speakers and listeners, the distinction between '*discourse*' and '*Discourse*' is designed to 'recognize the interrelationships between social relations, social identities, contexts, and specific situations of language use' (MacKay, 2003, p. 2). Williamson & Hague, (2009, p.5) integrate the technological aspect in their definition of literacy and its link with school: 'knowing how technology and media affect the ways in which we go about finding things out, communicating with one another, and gaining knowledge and understanding, (...) and understanding how technologies and media can shape and influence the ways in which school subjects can be taught and learnt'. According to Kern (2006), this fast evolution of communication technologies has changed not only language itself, but also its use and its pedagogy providing new forms of discourse or new ways to create meaning and to participate in communities. However, because the internet introduces multimedia dimensions that go beyond print text, alters traditional discourse structures, introduces new notions of authorship, and allows users to participate in multicultural learning communities, it requires a more complex view of literacy that goes well beyond the skills of encoding and decoding texts. Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack (2013) suggest that literacy should be thought of as a moving target, continually changing. Multiliteracies reflect at the moment this 'impact of communication technologies and multimedia on

the evolving nature of texts, as well as the skills and dispositions associated with the consumption, production, evaluation, and distribution of those texts' (Borsheim, Meritt, & Reed, 2008, p. 87).

Research in the area of adolescents' out-of-school digital multiliteracy practices is looking at a wide variety of meaning making in blogs, social networking pages, wikis, fan fictions, etc. that show new forms of multimodal composition which reflect the teenagers' socially situated identities (Rowse & Walsh, 2011). At the same time 'multiliteracy pedagogy must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with multimedia that teenagers are using to make sense of themselves' (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p.9). There is evidence in the literature that different SNSs are used for different social purposes and are related also to personality characteristics, for instance Facebook to stay connected with one's social network and instant messaging for relationship maintenance and development (Hughes et al., 2012; Mark & Ganzach, 2014, Quan-Haase & Young, 2010). Multiliteracies acknowledge the diverse forms of literacy, broadens the concept of literacy from 'reading the word' to 'reading multimodal texts'. Assumes that in the process of becoming literate adolescents are making sense of the world and themselves and trying to understand the influences of social, cultural and political contexts. Finally, multiliteracy is fundamentally about communication with and understanding the communication of others (O'Rourke, 2005). This translates into this study in focusing and exploring teenagers' lives and experiences, reflecting on existing knowledge and interests, and considering the social, cultural and emotional dimensions of

their digital experiences. It also shapes my understanding of language as ‘a system of options and meaning potentials’ that is to say, I embrace the idea of ‘meaning as choice’ (Halliday, 1978), and multiliteracy as ‘the expression in a social context of those meaning choices’.

2.1.3 Multimodality

Jewitt (2012, p.250) defines multimodality as ‘an interdisciplinary approach that comes from social semiotics and understands communication attending to the social interpretation of a range of forms for making meaning’. This definition also emphasizes the importance of the social context and resources available for meaning making by paying attention to people’s choices of resources. The increasing use of multimedia in and out-of-school settings has generated an interest in multimodality notably in the field of education. Multimodality has been applied for instance, to a range of multimodal digital genres to explore questions of digital identities and literacy (Alvermann, 2002; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Marsh, 2006).

The changing technological landscape of a globalized world has produced new uses of literacy, as discussed previously, but also new means for representation, expression, and communication (Alvermann, 2004; Carrington, 2005; Gee, 2003; Hagood, 2003; Kress, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Luke, 2003). Within these new forms of literacies, the written word is not the sole method of communication (Gee, 2003). Multimodality, or ‘the integration of words with visual images, sound, streamed video, and/or

paralinguistic symbols', has become an important aspect of digital communication practices (Carrington, 2005; Hagood, 2003; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Knobel & Lankshear, 2002; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006). Walsh (2010, p.213) states that 'multimodal literacy refers to meaning making that occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts'. Thus, there has been a shift not only in the reading and writing processes of texts from cognitive models, but also in the production of these new digital texts and how they are consumed (Luke, 2003). Multimodality concerns plurality of text forms and changing social and semiotic landscape where 'meanings are made through many representational and communicational resources of which language is but one' (Jewitt, 2008, p.246) and where the screen has turn into the most common way of representation for teenagers.

Multimodality is primarily informed by linguistic theories, in particular, the work of Halliday's (1978) social semiotic theory of communication and the developments of that theory (Hodge & Kress, 1988). It focuses on people's processes of meaning making, processes in which choices are made from a network of alternatives: selecting one modal resource (meaning potential) over another. Modes can also be understood in terms of Halliday's (Ibid) classification of meaning. He suggests that every sign simultaneously tells us something about 'the world' (ideational meaning), positions us in relation to someone or something (interpersonal meaning) and produces a structured text (textual meaning). Multimodality sets out to explore how these meanings are realized in all modes. Social networking sites such as Facebook,

Instagram, WhatsApp, and online blogs, are key areas of multimodal communication in teenagers' everyday life (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2008; Rowsell, 2013).

Multimodality is expressed also linguistically as the distinction between speech and writing blurs online (Luke, 2003). Hagood, Stevens, & Reinking (2002, p.75), conclude that, 'for adolescents, literacy is multimodal, and rather than receive information from static texts, they actively create meaning dynamically across diverse media'.

Nevertheless, multimodality should be interpreted as more than different modes to convey messages. Bazalgette & Buckingham (2013, p.95) discuss some of the simplistic conceptions around the term and highlight that 'multimodality is being appropriated in some cases in a way that merely reinforces a long-standing distinction between 'print' and 'non-print' texts'. This imbalance comes from identifying multimodality only with methods of communication, instead of focusing on 'how the interaction between modes can produce meanings that are more than the sum of the parts' (Idem). Accordingly, these simplistic descriptions of multimodality imply that 'multimodality equals methods of communication' and that the printed text has a higher status than other modes, especially in academic contexts, disregarding the fact that much of what falls into the '*other category*' is actually also written: websites, e-mail, e-books and SMS. The concept of multimodality then should shift from these simplistic interpretations to try to grasp more insights into how teenagers actually interact with texts, written or not, in the contexts of their everyday lives. This would mean

changing perspectives from learning about how meanings are constructed and defined, towards understanding how particular points of view can be conveyed, and ultimately, how broader assumptions and ideologies are sustained:

‘It would include recognising and exploring the social, historical, economic, political and cultural forces that shape and determine the production and consumption of texts and meanings’

(Bazalgette & Buckingham, 2013, p. 4)

Bezemer & Jewitt (2010) sum up the theoretical assumptions guiding a multimodal approach to literacy which include three key understandings:

- (a) Meanings are communicated through multiple semiotic resources;
- (b) Meanings are socially constructed and are shaped by the social community that one is part of;
- (c) People strategically utilize various modes in significant ways to communicate or represent meaning in particular ways.

Across all these social and cultural practices of meaning making, teenagers engage also in an on-going process of constructing their identities (Jewitt, 2008), because these meanings realised from particular moments of multimodal communication are linked to previous experiences, personal histories, specific cultures, communities, and of course, identities as individuals. Multimodality recognises that all modes can contribute equally to meaning, stepping aside from considering only language and that they realize social functions, having different meaning potentials; therefore,

communication is constrained and produced in relation to the social context and the teenagers' relation to the social context through identity. Multimodality is a key tenet that informs this study regarding how my daughters realise meaning and express identity through their particular selection and articulation of modes.

2.2 Identity and Digital Identities

2.2.1 Teenagers' Identity

'Identity is an ambiguous and slippery term' Buckingham (2008, p.1). The ambiguity comes from the fact that identity is considered to be something unique to a person, what makes someone singular, but also implies a relationship with a broader social group; values that we share with other people. Therefore, identity involves 'two criteria of comparison: similarity and difference' (Jenkins, 2008, p.17), and 'the debate around identity derives from the tensions between these two aspects' (Buckingham, Ibid, p.1).

Psychological theories of identity recognise teenagers' identity construction as a period of change and development. Identity is not something fixed, but on the contrary, something shaped by interactions that follow certain normative stages (Erikson, 1971; Marcia, 1966). A number of theories related to particular groups (e.g., Cass, 1979; Helms, 1994) mark development through progressive, linear stages or statuses that lead to an end point in which identities are internalized, synthesized, and become permanent.

Research indicates that in the transition from childhood to adolescence, individuals see themselves in terms of personal beliefs and standards (Harter, 1998). Also, some of the descriptions teenagers make of themselves during this period are contradictory (Harter & Monsour, 1992), as they show a tendency to evaluate themselves globally, but also according to specific characteristics such as good or bad at sports, academic, social relations, appearance, etc. (Masten et al., 1995).

Erikson (1993), who has extensively written about identity development from a psychosocial point of view but does not argue the social and cultural critical role in shaping human development, used the term 'identity crisis' to describe what teenagers go through in their lives during this period. From Erikson's (1971, p.71) point of view the crisis is solved 'when there is a satisfactory adjustment between the person's own individuality and the social roles that he/she carries out'. A unitary sense of identity is constructed after a successful search for '*who one is*'. Buckingham (2008) recognizes these psychological perspectives useful to interpret teenagers' relationship with digital media in that they facilitate experimentation with different potential identities, and Boyd & Ellison (2007) also imply that social networking sites provide opportunities for social interaction and affiliation that are crucial developmental tasks for this age group. But other scholars, for example Schmitt et al., (2008) in their study on young people personal homepages or Subrahmanyam et al. (2009) on blogs, challenge this interpretation of technology for identity experimentation, and see it more as

a place for self-expression, for sharing information with peers and identity construction.

During adolescence, teenagers continue to grow and change physically, cognitively and emotionally. These changes go along the urge to forge their own identities and develop relations with others than close family, so friends and peers become more influential during this period (Larson & Richards, 1991). This is a fact in Western societies where fostering independence is critical for identity development (Twenge, 2013). According to Brown's seminal work on adolescent peer groups (Brown et al., 1994), peers influence teenagers as '*crowds*' or as '*cliques*'. Crowds place adolescents in a social network and contribute to identity development by influencing the ways in which adolescents view themselves and others (e.g. jocks, nerds, brains, populars, etc.). Cliques are much smaller groups of peers that are based on friendship and shared interests. Members of a clique tend to be similar in terms of age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, behaviours, and attitudes (Steinberg & Morris, 2001, p.94). This seems similar to what Ito et al., (2010) describe as friendship driven and some of the interest driven practices in teenagers.

From a sociological perspective, sociologists acknowledge that the nature of youth varies according to the social context, in relation to social class, gender and ethnicity, and are more concerned with the social environment that youth face rather than with their internal conflicts. They pay attention to how the social context influences teenagers focusing on their social and cultural aspects of identities and their interactions with digital media, and how self-

representation is used to convey information and images about the self and its identities to others (Baumeister, 1998). For Jenkins (2006) identity is also about how individuals or groups perceive and define themselves, and how other individuals or groups perceive and define them. Identity is formed through the socialization process and the influence of social institutions like the family, the education system, the mass media and the digital media, and through our ongoing interactions with others. It is often characterized in terms of one's interpersonal characteristics, our personality traits, the relationships and roles we take in different contexts and one's personal values and beliefs (Calvert, 2002). According to Ha (2008, p. 64) 'the West and the East conceive the notion of identity differently'. While Western scholars' perception of identity is considered 'hybrid and multiple', Eastern scholars interpret it as a sense of belonging to a group or community. Despite the differences, Wu (2011) converges that identity is on the one hand, the way we perceive ourselves, and on the other, how others perceive us. It is inextricably tied to the social contexts out of which it arises. It is, furthermore, constructed through a mixture of social practices in which individuals are involved in their daily lives. Identity is unarguably 'a reflection of the various ways in which people understand themselves in relation to others' (Ige, 2010) and 'how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future' Norton's (2000, p. 5).

Social theorists consider identity as 'a process' (Block, 2007). Thus, some authors (e.g., Ray & Hall, 1995) prefer to use identification in an attempt to imply this procession sense. For Harré (1987), identity is about the constant and on-going engagement of individuals in interactions with others. Tajfel & Turner's (1979) social identity theory states that a person does not possess only one 'self', but rather several 'selves' each activated in a certain situation. In much a similar way, other researchers such as Luk & Lin (2007, p.50) believe that a person has a variety of identities within him or her, stressing on the fact that his or her identities are not predetermined, fixed and static but are 'sometimes incoherent, fragmented, multiple, and conflicting'. That is why some researchers prefer to use the term 'identities' in the plural instead of using the singular form. Social identity develops from social constructionism, whereby identity is being permanently constructed through limitless contact with people and social experiences which reinforce existing perceptions of identity or enable exploration of new facets of oneself (Abbas & Dervin, 2009, in Young, 2013, p.3). For other researchers in the poststructuralist perspective, identity is considered as being unstated, contextually driven, and emerging within interactions of a given discourse (Miyahara, 2010). Researchers in a constructivism paradigm have developed two theories regarding identity: social identity theory which claims that identity is bipolar: social and personal (Tajfel, 1974), and cross-cultural theory according to which identity represents two ideas: independent-self and interdependent-self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Another account of what is understood by identity can be found in the work of Bauman (2000). In his view, the current globalized society and the decline of the welfare state contributes to a sense of instability and turns identity formation into something fluid that can be infinitely negotiable. Identity stems from the need of a sense of belonging but the instability of modern societies and the fast changes occurring contribute to the loss of the traditional frames of reference and consequently make impossible to fix identity. Therefore, identity becomes something to be invented rather than discovered. For Giddens (2008), identity translates into people in general have to face a whole range of choices and decision making about themselves and their lives as if identity were a kind of project. Identity becomes fluid and malleable, something to construct and fashion. In this sense, identity is not something given but 'something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual' with the increasingly diverse ways they have to do so (Giddens, Ibid, p.52).

A different understanding of identity comes from Butler's (2006) 'queer theory' which challenges established categories of identity related to gender because they lead to exclusion. She suggests that identity is also performed, it is an illusion, an object of belief compelled by social sanction and taboo when you do not follow the 'norm' and something that forces us to conform to the pre-established standards. Butler's concept of 'gender performativity', to which she refers in order to suggest that individuals develop and perform gender in society as a result of the socially constructed norms, not something

we *are*, but rather something we *do* on a daily basis. This 'undefinition' of gender is carried out in different ways online for example with avatars or in Second Life where the body and the virtual self are just something we choose instead something we are given (Thomas, 2007). Identity creation in adolescence and beyond is argued by Butler as being a myth, as one is not the conscious creator of an identity. Butler subsequently argues that identity itself is merely a repetition of acts, discursively produced and embedded within the structures of male, heterosexual dominance. All these understandings of identity challenge assumptions about the ability to form and create an identity in adolescence as merely a developmental achievement.

In conclusion, researches from a variety of disciplines have tackled identity from different perspectives. Some agree on the importance of considering the sociocultural context of individual identity development during adolescence as I have discussed. Psychiatrists and social psychologist (Erikson 1963, Sherif & Sherif 1964) have noted that a supportive peer group constitutes the primary social arena in which teenagers develop a sense of identity as they experiment with a variety of social roles and decision-making. Pragmatic philosophers and sociologists (Mc-Call & Simmons 1978, Stryker, 1980) have stressed the importance of everyday social interaction in identity construction. Elwell (2013, p.246) writes that social media sites combine presentations of self and a multiplicity of voices to form 'an interactive performance involving multiple actors and encompassing multiple episodic narratives that are dispersed across an array of media platforms and yet

integrated around an on-going dialectic of identity formation'. And Livingstone (2008) emphasizes the importance of online communication through social media in identity construction:

'It seems that creating and networking online content is becoming, for many, an integral means of managing one's identity, lifestyle and social relations'.

(Livingstone, 2008, p. 4)

In addition, current views of identity recognize that youth construct themselves in terms of multiple identities related to histories, culture, and social relations, (Gee, 1990; Holland et al. 1998; McCarthey & Moje, 2002). For example, The NLG (1996, p.17) states that 'people are simultaneously members of multiple life worlds, so their identities have multiple layers that are in complex relation to each other'. Online sites are providing youth with the spaces where multifaceted identities can be constructed, experienced, explored and performed (Luke, 2003). Communication, through multiliteracy practices, provides opportunities for teenagers to reflect on their own thoughts, actions, gender, etc., and the use of social networking, texting, and posting photos are normal and natural ways of doing it.

In this thesis, guided by the literature reviewed, I understand identity construction in general as a sociocultural concept, as a process through which teenagers make choices about themselves and express themselves in many different ways about issues that are significant for them whether they are offline or online. Identity is 'enacted over and over throughout experiences and exposure to the social world resulting in self-transformation' (Young, 2013, p.3). Identities are not fixed entities but

developmental, but not in a linear way in which once teenagers go through a phase they continue on to the next one. I understand this identity construction process more as an iterative cycle that is influenced by the different contexts in which teenagers interact and guided by what and how they want to achieve. It is a process that includes understanding and integration of oneself in relation to the past, present and future (Moshman, 2005), and which is shaped by different variables, such as adults, peers, media, interests, education and culture.

2.2.2 Digital Identities, Multiple Identities

The term 'digital identity' has emerged through the evolution of the internet. Wherever we go, we leave traces of our identity: a comment in a forum, maintaining a blog, creating a full profile in a social network; we are letting others know about who we are, what we do, and what image of ourselves we want to convey. The multiplicity and ubiquity of social networking sites affords individuals many opportunities to represent aspects of their "self" online, thus projecting their identities.

Thomas' (2007, p.9) notion of identities online as the '*authoring of self*' informs this study in helping to explore how my two teenage daughters '*narrate themselves*' in an out-of-school environment in response to and in expression of their positioning as middle class multilingual adolescents. Therefore, the way in which these two teenage girls make use of their literacy practices can signal their identities and vice versa (Barton & Hamilton, 1998):

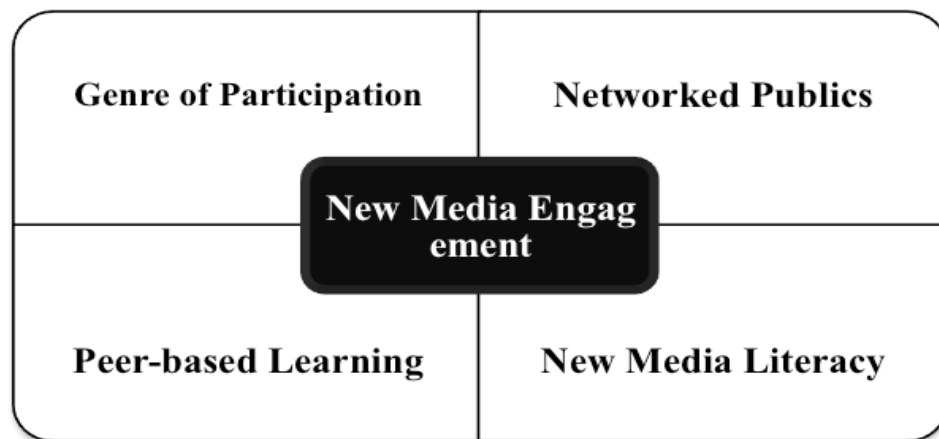
‘Understanding what it means to be literate in the digital world is to understand the participant’s practices in which they are actively constructing multimodal texts and experimenting with new forms of developing and expressing their identities’.

(Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 182)

Some of the conceptions of digital identity describe it as a digital version of a person’s real identity (Black, 2010), while others sustain that online identities reflect aspects of the self in a more idealized form (Manago, Graham, Greenfield & Salimkhan, 2008) arguing that when teenagers ‘author the self’ online they have more control of how they want to present themselves. Status messages, digital self-portraits, likes and dislikes and even other people opinions are all controllable and editable. Many teenagers view their online and offline identities as identical or complementary, for them, there is no divide, but many reflect on a more positive image of themselves. When a teenager presents him or herself online they purposefully select the text, image, audio, etc., in order to create the impression they wish to create, usually an improved version (Miller & Arnold, 2003).

Multiliteracy practices offer the opportunity to develop and emphasise these different aspects of identity in multimodal, multilingual and global social spaces. Gee (2000, p. 100), defines identity as ‘acting and interacting as a certain kind of person’, and argues that individuals develop an affinity-identity by participating in specific practices in social contexts. Goode (2010, p. 502) similarly views identity as ‘a product of participation in communities’, and Ito et al. (2010) suggest four key concepts that characterise how digital identity is shaped in media engagement and that are summarised in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Ito et al.'s (2010) New Media Engagement Conceptual Framework



This framework sees teenagers as ‘complete beings’ at each stage instead of just in terms of ‘ages and stages’ of what they will become later, they collectively participate in society and are given voice as they ‘negotiate, share and create culture with adults and each other’ (Corsaro, cited in Ito et al., 2010, p.7). Ito et al.’s (2010) conceptual framework draws from existing theories that are part of the ‘social turn’ in literacy studies (Gee, 2000, Street, 1994), and that I have discussed and related to in this chapter, and it emphasizes the importance of social participation and cultural identity independently of the context in which it takes place. The pillars of this framework rely on:

- *Genres of participation*: ‘different ways in which teens engage with new media and how their engagement relates to social participation and identity’ (Ito et al. 2010, p. 76). These genres do not attach categorically to individuals; they show the different engagements that teenagers make in specific forms of sociability and identification with media genres. Ito et al. (Ibid, p.16) describe two main genres of participation: *friendship-*

driven and *interest-driven*. The first one relates to interactions with friends, peers and family, and the second one refers to contexts where they find relationships related to interests, hobbies, and career aspirations. In terms of degrees of commitment to media, they describe three main commitments: 'Hanging out' which corresponds to the genre of friendship-driven participation, 'Geeking out' which is linked to an interest-driven genre, and 'Messing around' which describes media engagement in which youth are playing with, learning and getting serious about a particular practice. The genres describe different levels of investment in a way that integrates the understanding of technical, social and cultural patterns, and picture a different way of seeing media engagement away from taking only into consideration the platform used, the frequency of media use or other categories such as gender, age, or socioeconomic status. Genres of participation allow also a more holistic approach by juggling with characteristics that are permanently under negotiation. The genres come from the patterns observed in the data collected from their study:

'We have identified genres based on what we saw in our ethnographic material as the distinctions that emerge from youth practice and culture, and that help us interpret how media intersect with learning and participation. (...) These genres represent different investments that youth make in particular forms of sociability and differing forms of identification with media genres.

(Ito et al., 2010, pp. 17, 18)

- *Networked Publics* refer to emerging practices surrounding membership and participation on a series of websites that dominate young people's media participation in public culture and help to develop their public

identity (Appadurai & Breckenridge 1988).

- *Peer-based Learning* relates to the informal learning outside of school settings both interest-driven and friendship-driven in which teenagers engage in social and recreational activities online with peers.
- *New media literacy* addresses the current practices of teenagers and the different kinds of literacy events in which they engage. 'Through participation in social network sites such as Facebook, (among others) as well as instant and text messaging, they are constructing new social norms and forms of media literacy in networked public culture that reflect the enhanced role of media in young people's lives' (Ito et al. 2010).

What is also central in this framework is identity investment (Cummins et al., 2005a, 2005b): the recognition that any effective and inclusive pedagogy needs to view the interactions that take place not only between teachers and learners, but also with peers and parents as carving out interpersonal spaces in which knowledge is generated and exchanged, and identities are negotiated (Hall & du Gay, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). My two daughters participate in social media every day in a variety of ways to disclose information about themselves, for example with their profile photo, when they accept or reject friends, when they post, comment or tag. They make explicit decisions about themselves, and through this and many more choices in other modes of communication they express their identities (Boyd, 2014). Multimodal digital texts created by teenagers are often associated with personal constructed identities (Alvermann & Heron, 2001). Thus, digital identity is not a fixed trait; it is

changing, context-dependent, and inextricably linked with the variable practices and resources of specific settings (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

I am, therefore using Ito et al.'s (2010) framework of analysis for researching and illustrating teenagers' online cultures in this study context instead of building my own framework from the literature because their ethnographic approach that moves away from simply defining spaces of interaction into how teenagers participate in general across a variety of media activities is appropriate to answer my research questions. Ito et al.'s (2010) framework brings together multiliteracies, multimodality, identity and out-of school practices, and recognises that teenagers seek, share and use information in a certain way to convey identity through multiliteracy practices and that those practices in digital spaces are socially situated with meaning negotiated by the multiple tools in the digital community. These key concepts based on modes of participation instead of individual characteristics will be discussed in Chapter Three and will help me to code and analyse the data in order to find patterns guided by genres of participation, networked publics, peer-based learning and new media literacy.

2.3 Out of School Digital Practices

Out-of-school digital practices are generally described as examples of learning in informal contexts. A broad definition of informal learning is one that views learning which goes on outside of a formal educational environment such as the school (Ferguson et al., 2015; Tan, 2013), and is self-

directed and exploratory (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012), or the learning projects that we undertake for ourselves (Smith, 2009). In formal education educational standards related to a specific curriculum have to be met, which leads to a recognised credential, and learning can only occur in this organised and structured environment where it is also intentional (Rodriguez, 2015). Nevertheless, the boundaries between learning in and out-of-school settings do not seem to be clearly established (Barron, 2006), and definitions of formal and informal learning are contested (Sefton-Green, 2004; Selwyn, 2007). Livingstone (2001) or Eshach (2007) attempt to define clearer boundaries between both terms, and Sefton-Green (2004, p.6) suggests that the differences between informal and formal learning can be 'more clearly made around the intentions and structure of the learning experience in itself'.

The OECD (2007, p.2) understands informal learning as 'the learning that results from experience of daily work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities' (...) Informal learning 'is often haphazard and influenced by chance, [occurring] ... inductively through action and reflection'. It covers activities like individual and personal research on a subject or interests that learners develop for themselves by using books, libraries, informal trainers, the internet or other resources. Informal learning also includes aspects whereby the individuals seek or want to learn a specific skill (self-directed learning) or when they look into a certain area and do not use formal ways to learn, like peers, mentors or media (Sefton-Green, 2013). Gerber et al., (2001) argue that:

'In essence, the informal learning can be defined as the sum of

activities that comprise the time individuals are not in the formal classroom in the presence of a teacher’.

(Gerber et al., 2001, p.570)

These understandings of learning as informal versus formal are linked to the setting in which they take place, but the boundaries between them are becoming less strict and more difficult to identify due to technology. Engagement with digital culture in informal settings through participation as the key to developing digital multiliteracies, offers potential for self-directed, peer learning through networked communities and endless online resources to support knowledge (Smith & Hull, 2013). There is as well evidence that students are using the digital and SNSs for informal learning (Selwyn, 2009; Madge et al., 2009; Mazman & Usluel, 2010). It seems that it is increasingly more important to understand learning independently of the attributes of formal or informal (Weigel, James & Gardner, 2009). In general, out-of-school practices take place out of reach of teachers and are also more difficult to access for researchers, which can impact negatively in more research taking place, but teenagers are bringing more and more informal practices (including social media) into formal educational contexts (Trinder et al., 2008), and therefore pushing for pedagogical practices where formal and informal mingle. Literacy is often considered a school-based competency, but it is introduced and developed in informal learning contexts such as social groups, affinity spaces online or the home environment (Meyers et al., 2013). Digital media is well served in out-of-school contexts also through the users’ voluntary multiliteracy engagements and reverted into formal learning situations; despite the fact that some scholars’ continue to belief that formal

education should not enter the controversial field of informal learning (Drotner, 2008). The out-of-school digital practices of teenagers have been a subject of research and interest for a while as many of them engage regularly in multiliteracy practices that are not part of their academic curriculum. For example, studies on the relationship between digital technologies and motivation to read (Hinchman et al., 2004; Lewis & Fabos, 2005), the function of online reading and writing in instant messaging (Dunston & Alvermann, 2006), on informal learning (Sefton-Green, 2004), or Gee's (2003) work on video games and learning which connects multimodality, multiliteracies, and the out-of-school literacy worlds of children and young people and see game playing as a new space for learning. These practices cannot be ignored, even if they are not considered formal learning, because as research indicates they do influence adolescents' multiliteracy and identity construction practices. There is also a considerable body of research in favour of attending to children's diverse interests and experiences outside school to motivate multiliteracy. For example, Cummins et al., (2005) assert that students' knowledge and experience acquired outside school in informal settings play a critical role in shaping their identities and cognitive functioning. Other research in out-of-school settings suggests that kids pick up academic content and skills as part of their play (Gee, 2008). Ling & Yttri (2006) have argued, looking into mobile phone use, that communicative patterns depend on the particular developmental needs of adolescents who are engaged in negotiations over social identity and belonging, and Baron (2008) has examined the relation between online communication and changes to reading and writing conventions, and youth uptake of more informal forms

of online writing as part of a broader set of social and cultural shifts in the status of printed and written communication. Dyson (1990) has discussed how acknowledging the different experiences early literacy learners bring into the learning process can foster literacy, Hibbert (2013) on how multiliteracy theories encourage teachers to construct and build classroom practices based on learners' knowledge, experiences, capabilities, and interests, Crook (2012) on highlighting the importance of technology skills required in curricula as well as in young people's recreational engagements, and Livingstone & Sefton-Green (2016) on the connections around the teenagers' lives in school, home and online. Consequently, there is a real interest in research in out-of-school settings, where learning occurs but seems to go unnoticed by schools, educators, policy makers, parents and even the same students, and which could provide insights into what learners really want to get from their learning.

The disconnect between in and out-of-school learning practices seem to be due to the very essence of what the school environment offers and asks from learners, but also to the lack of recognition from all the actors involved in education of the potential benefits of the learners' out-of-school experiences and practices for formal education. In consequence, crediting the importance of out-of-school teenage lives in literacy development and identity construction is an act of common sense on the part of all the actors involved in education. Since the influential work of Heath (1983), many scholars have focused on the importance of literacies developed at home (Freebody, Ludwig & Gunn, 1995; Henderson, 2011; Thomson, 2002), and on the pedagogical approaches that could bridge the 'alleged gap' between home

and school literacies or at least help to understand their differences (Cope & Kalantzis, 2010; Kamler & Comber, 2005; NLG, 1996). In addition, from a multiliteracies perspective it makes sense to make use of what children and teenagers are already doing and bringing into the classroom. Learners' out-of-school literacies are shaped by the 'funds of knowledge', the 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133), developed in the social spaces of home, peer groups, communities and popular culture (Moje et al., 2004; Moll et al., 1992). Moll et al., (1992, p.132) argue that 'strategic connections between home and school are essential to develop pedagogy that is more relevant and engaging'. Other studies such as Selwyn (2006) have identified levels of frustration in learners because of the restrictions they experience in school settings. Kolikant (2012) suggests that students experience a 'two value system', outside of school where sharing and innovation are encouraged, and in school where learning operates as the performance of the individual student, putting into evidence the mismatch between the in and out-of-school settings. Finally, Brent, Gibbs et al., (2012) put into evidence the belief that the use of technology these young experience at home may not be understood as 'serious learning' both in and out-of-school, contributing to perpetuate the mismatch. Livingstone & Sefton-Green's (2016) book: *The Class: Living and Learning in the Digital Age*, provides an account of the ways in which adolescents' learning and identity are shaped by digital media in and out of school. They challenge the belief of considering adolescents as 'obsessed youth (...) lost in the digital world' (Ibid, p.55) and show how the participants

in their study are using new digital forms of communication and expression to engage in interactions with others, how they build their identities within the family, school, and friendship environments, and how these spheres are interconnected. They explore the fragmentary coexistence of school, family and the social lives of adolescents and suggest that the gap between in and out-of-school environments comes from the fact that these environments exclude each other to try 'to avoid messy conversations about social and economic inequality' (Ibid, p.108) at school. At the same time, parents' efforts to bridge the home/school settings by organizing learning at home is unrecognized by the school and helps to extend inequalities: 'the undoubtedly exciting calls to reimagine education in ways that rely on families to support and extend learning exacerbating socioeconomic inequalities' (Ibid, p.189). This understanding of in and out-of-school mismatches on what it means 'to be educated' at school and at home links with social and cultural capital theories (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000, Coleman, 1990) that acknowledge that some values are acquired through socialization in the family and reinforced by formal schooling. Therefore, new ideas and changes in education, for example with technology, can prove hostile to both environments. In Livingstone & Sefton-Green's (2016) study, participants are eager to keep their home and school lives separately, particularly online. The researchers discuss how families, teachers and others may work together to build more pathways that would let young people pursue their out-of-school interests more productively in school.

As this study is based exclusively on digital practices at home, I am not challenging the opposition between home and school settings. But I do

acknowledge the complex interaction between home, school, teachers and parents' attitudes playing an important role in teenagers' digital practices (Hollingworth et al., 2009; Lareau, 2000). The practices I will examine in this study will be situated, as I have already mentioned, in out-of-school settings, mainly at home, and are in line with the growing body of research that looks at these settings for other models of learning and engagement from the ones we can find in the classroom (Cole, 1997; Goldman, 2006; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Mahiri, 2004; Nocon & Cole, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Singleton, 1998; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). These diverse genre conventions of youth new media literacy practices may be of help in developing educational programs to be implemented in schools. The connection of the in-school and out-of-school communities of practice could shape awareness on both sides and respond to the evolving norms and expertise of new media literacies to provide a better understanding on how these literacy practices mirror identity issues.

I cannot end this section without questioning the current divide in the literature about the literacy learning in-school and out-of-school settings, that I previously referred to as the 'alleged gap', because common sense suggests that it is almost impossible to eliminate overlapping literacy practices and learning in both contexts, because I do not believe that the literacy learning that takes place in and out-of-school contexts is qualitatively different, and finally because the divide may not be real and therefore does not need bridging. In this, I am in line with other researchers in the field of digital multiliteracy such as Alvermann & Moore (2011), Hull & Schult (2002), or Leander & Lovvorn (2006) who question this matter. The data

analysis in Chapter Four will serve as a basis to discuss this issue. On the other hand, identity is also shown in the digital multiliteracy practices at home. Digital practices demanding interaction and dialogue help teenagers to develop their social presence (Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010). SNSs contribute to the social interaction necessary in adolescents' identity-construction processes (Alvermann, 2010). It is through these multiliterate activities that teenagers engage their social presence, while simultaneously constructing their identities (Hughes & Morrison, 2013).

2.4 Research Questions and Objectives

In deciding upon the research design, I was guided by my own research questions, which were informed by the previous literature review; by my professional experience in the use of new technologies for teaching, and finally by personal reasons as a parent of two teenagers. This study contributes to build knowledge in the out-of-school teenagers' literacy and identity studies linked to new technologies. Table 2.1 outlines the research objectives and the research questions addressed in this study.

Table 2.1: Research Questions and Objectives

Research Questions	Research Objectives
1- How do participants in this study use digital media for multiliteracy practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To explore how digital multiliteracies are used in out-of-school settings and their relationship with digital identities.• To explore how these two teenage girls use multimodal artifacts for literacy practices.
2- How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multimodal kinds of digitalised texts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To explore the digital identities of my two teenage daughters.• To explore factors that impact on their identity construction.
3- How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To suggests possible educational connections between what teenagers are doing in and out-of-school.• To use these observations to potentially inform actors related to literacy education as well as parents and teenagers.

2.5 Summary of Key Points

It is obvious from the literature review that concepts, definitions and boundaries regarding multiliteracies and digital identities in out-of-school settings are not clearly established. The literature describes digital literacies from different perspectives according to the scholars' diverse backgrounds and points of view on what constitutes to be, or rather 'not to be literate' in the present time.

For Eisenberg, Lowe & Spitzer (2004) and Buckingham (2003), it is a question of mastering the right skills and addressing those skills needed in

the information age in order to narrow the gap between digital and non-digital natives. The digital literate individual, from this perspective, knows when and how to effectively employ digital resources to resolve information needs and consequently digital literacy can be measured by comparison to expert models of performance.

Out-of-school contexts can provide learners with self-taught approaches to overcome lack of skills and help them to go by. It is common the use by teenagers of YouTube tutorials, for example, when they do not know how to do something (Tan, 2013). This is linked mainly to their interests and expressed therefore according to their specific digital identities.

Digital literacies can also be seen as 'the application of abstract mental models to activities involving digital content'. Digital literacies are 'habits of mind' that are assessed by testing how well learners apply cognitive frameworks to academic or non-academic situations (Buckingham, 2003). Out-of-school practices can support teenagers' development of digital literacy by giving them problem-based challenges that emphasise the application of 'habits of mind' to everyday situations and real-world scenarios.

Finally, digital literacies, as envisaged in this study, are viewed as 'the engagement in a set of practices involving digital tools and media that are deeply embedded in a particular context or activity'. These practices are emergent, socially constructed and situated, rather than predetermined; they are based on what works best, what teenagers get from them instead of what expert behaviours or prescriptive models might show. At the same time, they are difficult to assess because of the changing nature of technology and the

expectations on digital users. This perspective is closely linked with the development of the 'multiliteracies' framework embraced by the New London Group and other socio-cultural scholars on literacy such as Cope & Kalantzis, (2000); and Gee & Hayes (2011).

The informal contexts in which these teenagers' practices take place can develop structures for participation that lead to social learning and peer development (Smith & Hull, 2013). Directing attention to diverse contexts of use including non-academic ones, which are bound by specific circumstances and communities of practice can only bring a clearer picture of what teenagers do and why when they go online.

In this literature review, I have also looked into how teenagers seem to be using technology for identity construction. Digital identity construction includes self-representations online that can be achieved in many different ways: photos, videos, social networking sites, music, texting, etc. These uses seem to service self-expression and sharing of information with peers among other things to express identity (Schmitt et al., 2008), and not only for the sake of experimentation as Erikson (1971) suggested.

Online and offline identities seem to be an artificial divide and are better understood without forcing any clear boundary between them (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kendall, 2002; Lange, 2008). Boyd (cited in Lee, 2008, n.p.) suggests that the younger generation views online culture not as a separate place 'but as just a sort of continuation of their existence'. Luke (2003, p.402) predicted that researchers are finding it necessary to 'play catch up with the unprecedented textual and social practices that students are already engaging with'.

The research questions articulated in this study serve as a conducive common thread to reflect on identity and literacy issues in an out-of-school context.

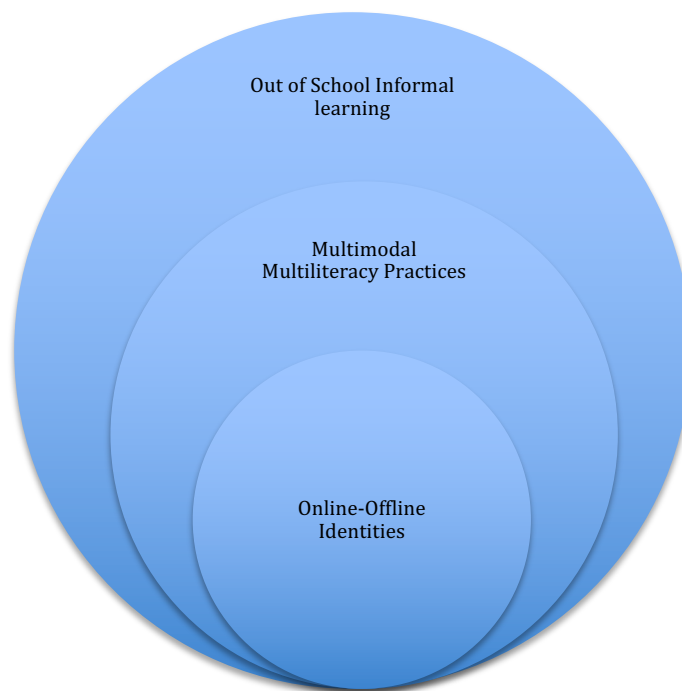
The key points of this study articulate in the following way:

- Literacy today involves digital technology
- Literacy practices are inherently social activities
- There is not only one literacy but multiliteracies
- Multimodality is not only the mode of communication, but it also takes into account how individuals make meaning with different kinds of modes
- Digital identities are social related expressions of the self
- Digital identities are something we do rather than something we are
- Out-of-school literacy research has a value on its own to learn more about the current practices of teenagers
- Learning out-of-school can be of use in academic settings
- There is no clear cut between the online and offline worlds for teenagers

Figure 2.3 illustrates the way in which the literature review has been undertaken in this study. It shows how identity, multiliteracy, multimodality and out-of-school practices are woven together. I considered out-of-school literacies as part of the outer circle in which instead of just the physical nature of the context I take into account how that space might be informed and shaped by multimodality, multiliteracy and identities. Identities are at

the core of the circles because they are what represent a person online and offline, those identities express themselves through acts of ‘authoring’ and communication in ways and in spaces of their choosing that exist across networks with global reach. Multimodal multiliteracies emphasize ‘the diverse social and cultural practices that go beyond the communicative competences of individuals’ (Goodfellow, 2001, p.2).

Figure 2.3: *Organisation of the Literature Review in this Study*



CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study employed a qualitative approach using participant observation, field notes, casual conversations, samples of multimodal artifacts, and respondents' feedback validation in order to extend and deepen my understanding of the relationships between two teenagers' digital multimodal literacies and identities and the possible links between academic and non-academic environments. The following chapter outlines the approach taken for the study and the rationale for choosing it. It discusses the methodology used derived from the sociocultural tradition within a qualitative descriptive paradigm and my position as a parent as a researcher (PAR). It also describes data collection procedures and elements of data analysis as well as issues related to the quality of the research. It sums up with a discussion of relevant ethical considerations.

3.1 Methodological Perspective and Position of Parent as Researcher (PAR)

In this research I assume ontological and epistemological positions about data collection and analysis that will necessarily have an impact on the outcome of my research. I developed an interest in digital identities and literacies by mainly working with and observing my students and my children in in and out-of-school settings. There are also conversations taking place in the profession that address the impact of technology in education

and family life. In this particular study there is no doubt that the researcher and the social world impact on each other and reality is inevitably influenced by his/her own perspective and values.

I position myself in the sociocultural literacy tradition, because 'interest is drawn to language and literacy in use, and the empirical work that has led to the development of current sociocultural perspectives has emerged mainly from ethnographic research' (Perry, 2012, p. 51).

This is a qualitative study that answers the research questions using an illustrative case study approach (Stake, 1995) consisting of two participants to have different views of the same concepts: out-of-school digital multiliteracies and digital identity construction.

My main aim was to observe at home what was naturally occurring regarding participants' online literacy practices and identity construction without any intentional aim of intervention. This is the essence of ethnographic research where the emphasis is put on intruding the least possible upon the situation under observation (Yin, 2003). Data related to how two teenage girls engage in digital multiliteracy practices in out-of-school environments, how their identities are constructed through them and how literacy and identity construction may influence each other came largely from participant observation, field notes, casual conversations, physical artifacts and respondents' validation, all taking place in the natural setting of their home (Yin, 2003). According to Bruce (2009, p. 302), ethnographic case studies

provide 'the best articulation of adolescents' media literacy processes, especially as much as the emergent forms of their use has not been studied'.

I recognise that all researchers strive for neutrality and objectivity when they carry on a study. In this specific situation in which I am the researcher, but also the mother of the participants (PAR), it is more difficult to acknowledge objectivity. The fact of being aware of this situation is a step forward to mitigate bias as it influences key decision-making throughout the entire research process (Dibley, 2011). I have therefore turned to writers who discuss that 'qualitative studies should be judged according to different criteria from those used by quantitative research providing an alternative to reliability and validity' (Bryman, 2012, p.390).

I wanted to understand the phenomenon under investigation, and I was aware of the fact that qualitative ethnographic research does not seek to generalize from a specific case, rather to provide in-depth descriptions that lead to general patterns. These patterns are then examined in other situations to see, when, and how they occur and what consequences they have for what members in the new setting can know, do, understand, and/or produce. This is often referred to as transferability, in contrast to generalizability. Guba & Lincoln, (1994) propose two main criteria to validate qualitative research, and Yardley (2000) four:

Table 3.1: *Criteria for Qualitative Research according to Guba & Lincoln (1994)*

Trustworthiness	Authenticity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credibility• Transferability• Dependability• Confirmability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairness• Ontological Authenticity• Educative Authenticity• Catalytic Authenticity• Tactical Authenticity

Table 3.2: *Criteria for Qualitative Research according to Yardley (2000)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sensitivity to Context• Commitment and Rigour• Transparency and Coherence• Impact and Importance

Both these criteria for assessing qualitative research have been controversial in the literature regarding their impact on studies but are nevertheless though provoking and worth mentioning without adhering literally to them. In my opinion, the main goal of research that uses the ethnographic case study approach, is to guide an investigation from a descriptive account to a piece of research that can add something else to knowledge that cannot be achieved by employing other approaches. I believe this is the case in this thesis.

In general, the three most referred criteria for evaluation of social research are reliability, representativeness and validity. Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable, how well the procedures of a certain research are described in great detail to enable other researchers to replicate. Representativeness, or whether the findings from a particular sample are representative, in this particular study, of a wider teenage population. Finally, 'validity or the integrity of the conclusions generated from a piece of research, which provide a true and accurate picture of what is being studied' (Bryman, 2012, pp.46-47). Being the present study a case study on two specific participants, reliability and validity can be discussed as tricky concepts to apply, because it can be argued that case studies are very rarely repeatable. Taking into account the particularity of the case study in itself and the essence of academia where recognition comes from originality and not from replication, replicability of any case study is something quite uncommon to happen (Burawoy, 2003, p.650, In Bryman, 2012). Having mentioned this, it does not prevent the researcher from specifying procedures of his/her study in detail in order to allow potential replicability.

How a case study can be representative and generalized beyond its specific research context is also a controversial issue linked to the importance of selecting participants. According to Flyvbjerg (2006, pp.9-19), 'in social science, the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study. (...) The advantage of the case study is that it can 'close in' on

real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice'. Therefore, I adhere to the statement below:

'One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated'.

(Ibid, p. 12)

In my specific case, I asked myself if my two teenage daughters were a representative sample of the multilingual, middle class teenage population in a developed country. I believe they are. My children were purposively selected for the appropriateness to the investigation based on characteristics of a digital active teenage population, the needs of the study, their willingness to participate and my personal interest in looking into their multiliteracy and identity practices. I do not consider my children a 'convenience sample' because the main reason in selecting them was not based on the fact that they were easy to reach, but on the deliberate choice I made beforehand for the research goals of this study. Purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals in a strategic way so that 'those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed' (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). The selection was also based on professional observation as a teacher on my own experience in working with teenagers. The participants represent two different age groups within the teen years and provide examples of digital multiliteracy practices and identity construction on a range of geographical situations and across different multimodal channels at different stages of adolescence. My two daughters

are part of a social population of teenagers in Europe that are identified not only by their age group, but also for the kind of digital social practices and behaviours that are typical of those teenagers. In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2011) noted the importance, for practical purposes, of participants' availability and willingness to participate in any research. I do not think I could have done a study on teenagers' out-of-school multiliteracy and identity construction practices in the same way as I have done in this study for practical reasons. I believe I would have offered a more restrictive account of what teenagers are engaged in at home regarding these practices. Despite purpose, there were several reasons that I took into account before I considered approaching my children for the present study.

First and foremost, as a researcher and as a parent I am concern with the amount of time my children spend online at home, the things they do and how this may affect them as human beings and their formal education. I wanted to know more about this to be able to understand it and widen my perspective. For example, studies such as Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, (2012) or Lareau (2000) emphasize the importance of parental attitude in children's digital practices and in according these practices educational values. I feel that these worries are of concern also for many other parents and educators. Second, their ages, (16 and 18). I am interested in digital multiliteracies but also in digital identity construction and how both my daughters expressed identity in accordance to their developmental stage. At the time of embarking on this study, my elder daughter was about to leave home to continue higher education in a university abroad. It will be the end of a cycle after which she is supposed to have acquired the literacy skills required to function at

university level and the maturity to live alone. My youngest child had just moved from 'College' to 'Lycée', entering a new universe where it feels more as a grown-up world and where she will enjoy more independence. I think these two stages in my children's lives were important and interesting to observe from the point of view of a researcher, a teacher and a parent.

Finally, the opportunity to carry out observations at home or during family social events was also a factor that I valued, because a crucial element of ethnographic research is the ability to participate in the lives of the people being studied in a way that allows the researcher to become part of the natural surroundings of the setting so that participants are the least possible affected by their presence (Yin, 2003). The disadvantages that I noticed, on the other hand, were the impossibility to disconnect family life from research during the data collection stage because every interaction at any given time was a potential source of data, and the feeling my daughters experienced of being permanently observed for the sake of the research.

Taken this into consideration, my research was conducted in full awareness of the myriad limitations associated with human beings studying other human beings, from the particular position of an insider researcher who is a parent as well (PAR), and from the data collection methods based on purposive sampling susceptible to selection bias. As with every choice made in research there are advantages and disadvantages. In my particular case, I have tried to specify which ones, but I consider that altogether, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. I have had the chance to observe at first-hand, what happens naturally in my home without any time or space limitations. I have defended my position and my choices in this study and I

am aware and understand the positions I self-consciously have opted into in this research (Kouppanou & Standish, 2013).

In order to minimise bias and to ensure a maximum of objectivity I have implemented ways of doing and I have taken into account a number of variables in the research design:

- Respondent validation or providing the participants with an account of the researchers' findings, as for example in Willis (1977) and Skeggs (1994). The goal is 'to seek confirmation that the researchers' findings and impressions are in tune with the views of those on which the research was conducted', (Bryman, 2012, p. 391). Because this was a study on personal messages, photos, etc. I agreed with my children that they would have access to all the data collected and that they would have a say in what to or not to include. I have provided examples in the ethical considerations in 3.5. The one drawback from respondent validation is that sometimes the researchers' work can make no sense at all for participants.
- Reflexibility as a way to aim for neutrality and objectivity. This means in this study acknowledging my position as a parent as a researcher (PAR) on my own children and reflecting on the implications of the methods from my specific family, cultural, political and social context (Morrow, 2005).
- Triangulation or using more than one method or source of data collection (Dezin, 2009). In the present study, informal interviews or casual conversations, participant observations, field notes and

samples from my children digital artifacts were used as sources of data and validated by respondents. Fine (1992, p. 220) notes the importance of ‘positioning researchers as self-conscious, critical, and participatory analysts, engaged with but still distinct from our informants’.

My epistemological stance is based on the concept of multiliteracies, and the New London School (2000), which is grounded in the sociocultural tradition, that is to say recognising the relevance of new forms of literacy as social practices associated with emerging multimedia and multimodal technologies (Swaffar & Arens 2005, Kern 2000, Swaffar et al., 1991, Kramsch 1993, 1995, Kramsch & Nolden, 1994). Multiliteracies as social practice places an emphasis in teenagers as producers rather than just consumers of digital texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). I also envisage language embedded in sociocultural environments and motivated by a drive to communicate in personal meaningful contexts. This approach recognises that languages shape the thinking, the relationships, the identity and the worldview of the people who make use of them, or as Vygotsky (1986) states:

‘Thought is not merely expressed by words, it comes into existence through them’.

(Vygotsky, 1986, p. 251)

In this ‘changing social and semiotic landscape’ (Jewitt, 2008, p. 246), I am considering not only words but different multimodal practices and the way in which they represent meaning across those modes, spaces and times.

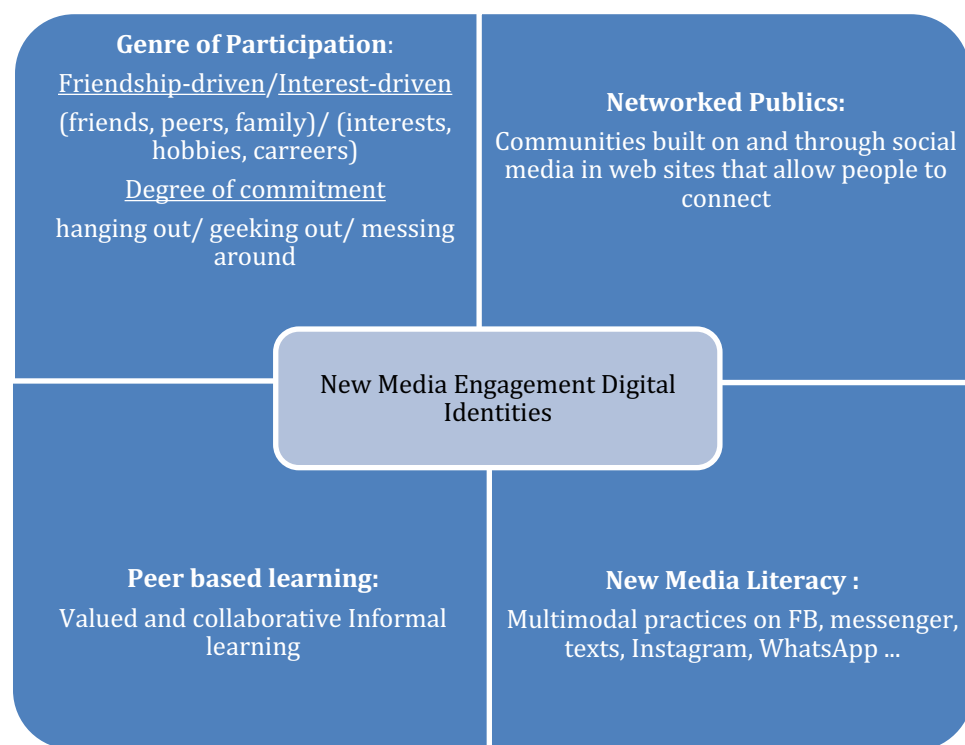
Being this thesis submitted towards an EdD it tends to show also the educational implications that can be of assistance in professional contexts.

In the sociocultural tradition, data is obtained mostly through naturalistic-oriented methods. That is, learners' interactions are, in general, observed in their natural everyday settings where data is contextualised, and themes for analysis are expected to 'emerge' from the data. A sociocultural analysis does not perceive the individual as a unique subject whose development, learning and awareness are organised entirely within the self; rather, learning, is viewed as a cultural apprenticeship into a specific community of practice meaning groups of people who share a concern, passion or interest for something they do as they interact regularly (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Moll, 1990; Renshaw, 2002).

In the present study, I decided to use Ito et al.'s (2010) framework to analyse data and answer my research questions. As a researcher, teacher educator, personal experience with my teenage daughters and survey of the existing literature, I came to the conclusion that Ito et al. (2010) offered an integrated framework that provided patterns based on *genres of participation* to organise the data collected and to establish the key concepts derived from it in an inductive and iterative way. In consequence, I decided not to build my own frame of analysis as I have mentioned in Chapter Two and use Ito's instead, because this framework 'addressed the gap existing between current technological trends and attention to specific youth populations and practices' using an ethnographic approach to understand 'how technology and media are meaningful to people in the context of their everyday lives' (Ito

et al., 2010, p.4). The lens through which analysis occurred was then primary based upon this framework key themes but was expanded with themes and subthemes derived from the literature review and my interpretations of what was considered meaningful for the analysis. I have Ito et al.'s (2010) conceptual framework of analysis applied to my study in the following way:

Figure 3.1: Ito et al.'s (2010) Conceptual framework adapted to the present study



Genres of Participation follow Ito et al.'s (2010) but friendship-driven, and interest-driven subthemes are the result of specific data in this study. Peer based learning is considered as valuable and collaborative informal learning by participants, and Networked Publics reflect how these communities are perceived by participants in their practices. Finally, New Media literacy explores all the multimodal practices linked to new media, especially SNSs (See Table 3.8). Another theme that was not included in Ito et al.'s (2010)

framework but which was present in my data answered research question 3 in this study, namely the alleged gap between in and out-of-school practices. Four subthemes resulted from the data related to this new theme. A comprehensive map of themes and subthemes is included and detailed in Chapter Four, Figure 4.1.

3.2 Research Design

Given that the focus of the study was on out-of-school digital multiliteracy practices and how these were put in use for identity construction in teenagers, a qualitative approach appeared most befitting. An ethnographic illustrative case study strategy was adopted for the research as it helps to produce reports of experience (Stenhouse, 1981), and to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in real-life context (Yin, 2003) (See table 3.3). Ethnography requires the researcher to interpret the real world from the perspective of the informers in the investigation (Dobbert, 1982), and being this study on digital literacies, it also was driven by an interest ‘to understand how media and technology are meaningful to people in the context of their everyday lives’ (Ito. et al., 2008, p. 7).

Table 3.3: Research Design

Qualitative Approach, Ethnographic Illustrative Case Study
<p>Epistemological Perspective: Sociocultural, Ethnographic Illustrative Case Study</p> <p>Methods: Participant observation, Field notes, Casual conversations, Artifacts, Respondent Validation from participants</p> <p>Participants: Purposive sample of 2 multilingual teenagers (researcher’s daughters) from different age range, and from a high middle class social status.</p>

My intention in using case studies in this research was to investigate in-depth the different forms of out-of-school digital multiliteracy practices in two teenagers, and its relationship with their identity construction and their in-school literacy practices. These are contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts where the use of case studies has significant benefits (Yin, 2003). It involves examination of diverse issues and factors, rather than seeking a single cause of events as in more positivist research approaches. This aligns well with this study where a number of elements related to informal learning, technology, identity and context were integral to the investigation (Stake, 2000). Being in a situation of PAR I prioritised an approach to research that would disturb the family life the least possible to enable the collection of data in a more realistic and natural way. I do not think I would have got the same insights about my daughters' digital multiliteracy practices at home and identity construction if I had used other methods of data collection. For instance, the use of more structured interviews, questionnaires or more disruptive ways of observation would have been counter-productive. Furthermore, the type of research questions in this study, the degree of control possible of the researcher over behavioural events, and the focus on a contemporary phenomenon advised the use of case studies (Yin, 2003).

The contribution of a study like the present one lies explicitly in the nature of offering an in-depth analysis of the digital practices of a few number of participants who are observed in a very intensive way across all kinds of situations in their home. Studies like this one are difficult to put into practice because of the access restrictions researchers have to face, and the difficulty

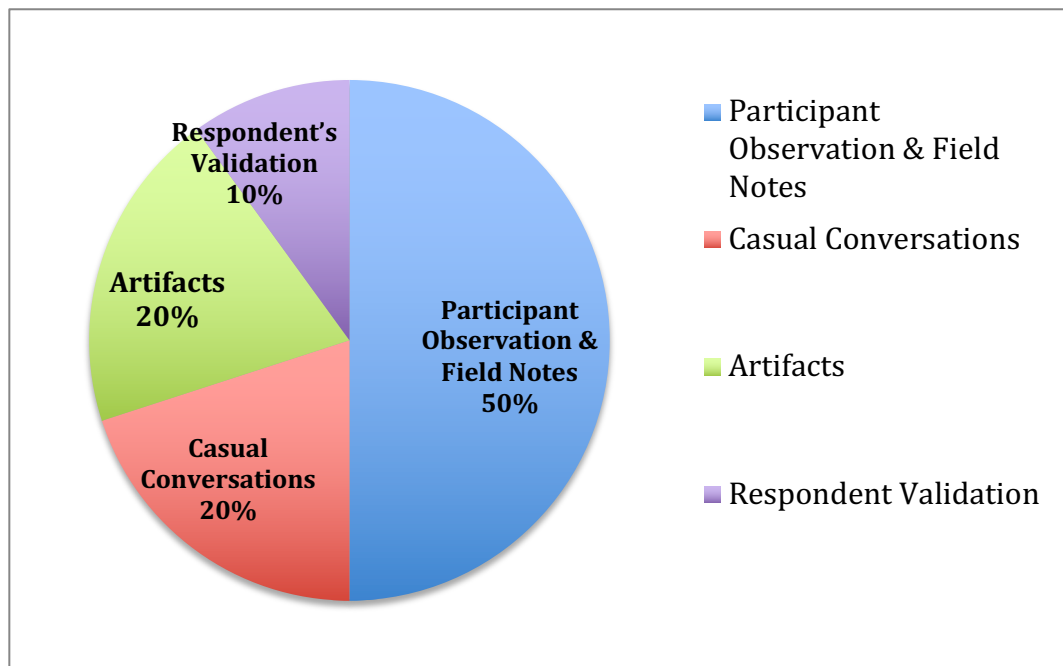
in gaining access to participants' trust as well. Therefore, participant observation, casual conversations, different artifacts and respondents' validation helped me in the data analysis and discussion that followed the data collection process.

In developing case studies using an ethnographic research approach, inferences are made from three sources: 1) from what participants say; 2) from the way participants act; and 3) from the artifacts participants use (Spradley, 1979). Data collection started two months after the thesis proposal was accepted in October 2015 and lasted for approximately 6 months in France and 1 month after one of the participants moved to India in July 2016 and the other to Holland on the same date. Table 3.4 illustrates my research design and methods and Figure 3.2 shows the approximately percentage of occurrence for each of the methods employed.

Table 3.4: Research Design and Methods of Data Collection

Sources of data collection	Participant Observation	Field Notes from Participant Observation	Casual Conversations	Artifacts	Respondent Validation
What participants say	Took place every day afterschool and at weekends from approx. December 2015 to June 2016 in France and from September to October 2016 in India and from Amsterdam	Records of observations on what participants said were systematically noted after observation on a field note template (Appendix D) Only 'significant events' were noted in detail	Around digital practices when participants were on their smartphones or laptop/computer mainly	Text messages, images, videos, all types of multimodal productions online	Took place during data analysis and discussion Explanations, discussions misunderstandings... Once final draft finished
The way participants act	Observation of digital practice behaviours at home in France, India during same dates and online from Amsterdam	Records of behaviours around multiliteracy and identity recorded on the field note template	Around choices the participants made in their digital practices for literacy and identity, in and out-of-school	Involvement in literacy practices outside school significant for literacy /identity construction and vice versa	Were participants' behaviours consistent with observation, field notes, casual conversations and respondents' validation?
What participants use and produce	Access to Participants SNSs on and off line (screen shots) once a week during same period	Notes about what participants used and produced in their digital multiliteracy and identity construction practices	The kinds of multiliteracy practices the participants used and produced and identity construction linked	Examples of friendship-driven and interest-driven productions, peer, media literacy learning, audiences out/in school	Are the multimodal multiliteracy examples that I use consistent with participants' vision of what happens out-of-school, and my perceptions?

Figure 3.2: Percentages of Research Methods Employed



This qualitative study is ethnographic because it looks at teenagers' digital multiliteracy and identity practices as a sociocultural process and it seeks to explore the beliefs, values and attitudes that structure the media behaviour of this group and uses a case study approach because it is an intensive, holistic description of two participants that circumscribes the investigation (Merriam, 2009).

The present study is in line with other research that has employed the ethnographic case study approach to look into digital literacy and identities in teenagers. For example: Boyd (2014), Ito et al. (2010), and Thomas (2007). In Boyd's (2014) *It is complicated, the Social lives of networked teens*, teenagers' online practices were studied all across the United States during several years, representing a compendium of case studies on how social

media plays a role in different aspects of teenagers' lives, their literacy practices and their identities. Ito et al.'s (2010) *Hanging Out, Messing Around, Geeking Out*, includes 23 case studies and establishes a framework to analyse how new media is used in relation to genres of participation instead of individual or context categorisations. Finally, Thomas's (2007) *Youth online: Identity and literacy in the Digital Age* presents the stories of young people from several countries around the globe, and how they interact in online communities and construct their identities in different social contexts. In these three books teenagers' voices are given the floor to express what, why and how they use the digital for literacy and identity construction purposes.

In my research the online experiences and practices of two teenagers are presented through their eyes, but also from the point of view of a PAR in the natural setting of their daily life activities at home. The aim is to contribute to research with more information on what is happening when teenagers are online at home and the eventual lessons that can be learned from that to inform, and to push the boundaries of literacy and identity research and educational practices.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

I employed a purposive sampling strategy. This is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. It is a sampling method that is more likely to be used in qualitative studies than random sampling strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My research focused on the case studies of two teenagers and their

digital multiliteracy practices at home; therefore, it made sense to select participants that allowed the access to gain in depth insights into these kinds of practices. The participants were representative of an upper middle class teenage population in an urban geographical location that is considered to be wealthy with a mix of expat people who come from different countries. Other recent studies have focused on teenagers in communities experiencing severe socio-economic disadvantages or on immigrants with disadvantages such as language, access to the internet or lack of devices that allowed easy connectivity at home (Linne, 2014; Stewart, 2014). Therefore, the participants selected were representative of a large group of teenage population that is, as my own research suggests, understudied. I did not specifically look into categories such as gender, class, or ethnic identity, I use the participants' age in brackets in the analysis to distinguished participants, and I relied on genres derived from youth practice and culture. In the analysis, I suggest an explanation for some of the preferences of specific media use, but I am unable to conclude if other variables play a role or not in actual practices. However, it would be interesting to include these variables in further research as I have mentioned in the limitations of the study in Chapter Five.

3.4 Participants

This study takes places mainly in a home situated in the outskirts of Paris, France considered as an upper middle-class town. This town has a renowned public international school and counts with a higher rate of expat foreigners.

Some of the observations took place also in India because of the family move to this country in 2016, and in Amsterdam where the elder participant attends university now.

Ana (pseudonym) was a 17-year-old teenager when data collection began. She was attending the Spanish section at the town's International school where there were other 13 different foreign nationalities. The curriculum was taught in French and Spanish. Other languages were English as a second language (High A levels) and Russian (standard levels). The last year of high school represented for her the end of a cycle after which she was supposed to have acquired the digital literacy skills needed to function at the university as an independent person and learner. She has since then continued higher education in English at a University in the Netherlands. Ana is very keen on surfing, skating, and video producing. She enjoys football, and Latino music. She is not very interested in girly kind of things, and she enjoys travelling, animals and children. She had high-speed internet access at school as well as at home in France and the Netherlands.

Marie (pseudonym) was 15 years old when data collection began. She was attending the same school as her sister but within the American section, with 3 days of teaching curriculum in French and 2 in English. She has since then moved to Pune (India) in July 2016 with us, and she is currently attending an International school that offers an International Baccalaureate programme (IB). All teaching is carried out in English and she studies German as a foreign language (High A levels). She is very keen on fashion and photography, follows several well-known fashion models, she loves clothes, shopping,

travelling and going to the gym. She works as a part time model with an International modelling agency in India and has participated in different catwalks and TV ads. She had her own computer in France and has now a laptop and smart phone in India, and unlimited high-speed access to the internet at home. The following table provides a brief synopsis of information about the participants.

Table 3.5: Brief Synopsis of Participants' Information

Participants	Years old when study began	Languages Spoken from higher to lower proficiency	Personal Owned Devices	Social Media Presence	Keen on
Ana	17	French +++ Spanish +++ English ++ Russian +	Smartphone Laptop iPad	FB Snapchat Instagram WhatsApp YouTube	Football, surfing, travelling Latino music Dogs, children
Marie	15	French +++ Spanish++ English+++ German++	Smartphone Computer Laptop (Now)	FB Snapchat Instagram WhatsApp	Shopping, Fashion, travelling Gym

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted under the principles of the UCL-IOE Research Ethics Committee: [file:///localhost/\(http://www.ucl.ac.uk:srs:governance-and-committees:resgov:code-of-conduct-research\)](file:///localhost/(http://www.ucl.ac.uk:srs:governance-and-committees:resgov:code-of-conduct-research)), and it adheres to the limitations and guidelines stipulated within the British Educational Research Association (<https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers->

[resources/publications/bera-ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011](#)).

I approached my children about the possibility of conducting research on their digital out-of-school practices for the first time in September 2015 in order to check their willingness and reactions about it. A priori, they were not bothered and had no objection. The only question raised by them was about the possibility of me being able to see everything they did online. I explained to them that they had to agree on what they wanted me to see, and on what I could include in the study, and that they had the right to retrieve from the study if they felt uncomfortable or threaten at any time. After this first informal conversation I decided to draft an informed consent letter and the code of conduct and data collection. This first draft was discussed with my children, their father, and my supervisor, and then changes were made according to their demands and comments. This gave me the possibility of explaining the nature and rationale of the research, and my position as a PAR more accurately. I felt that these documents were a first attempt to show my children the formal engagement I was taking toward respecting the promises I had made in that first informal conversation and to reassure them about their rights. Incidentally, they had a word to say in the 'potential risks section' referring to any topics that may make them experience discomfort or embarrassment and about personal spaces. This is included in the agreed code of conduct and data collection in Appendix B, taken into consideration, and modifications were then made accordingly, which was also a way of indicating how important participants' opinions were. A copy of the informed

consent letter is included in Appendix A and the agreed code of conduct and data collection follows on Appendix B.

I went into a lot of self-reflection about the ethical considerations underpinning this research because any research involving human interaction, and in this case my own children, demands from researchers to consider the impact on participants. The responsibility was mine to ensure that in the case of sensitive subjects arising I was to respect the welfare of the participants. Doing research on one's own children has to ensure the protection of the children, and at the same time, respect the integrity of the research (Adler & Adler, 1987; Ippolito, 2010). I believe the interest of this study was to learn as a researcher, as a teacher, and as a parent from observing what was naturally happening at home with my two teenage girls regarding their digital multiliteracy practices and identity construction through standards of integrity and responsibility. I followed professional guidelines about subject privacy and ethics, and decided, in agreement with my daughters, to leave highly personal information related to 'romantic relationships' out on purpose. I had my children best interest at heart. I approached my daughters with a clear idea of the demands that this study could place on our family life, their privacy, and time requirements. We decided to establish some rules together regarding interactions between us that took shape in the form of a 'code of conduct and data collection' approved and signed by both parties and included in Appendix B.

One of my main ethical concerns was that of my role as a (PAR), and the consequences of it in the methodology, the data analysis, and the

relationships with my children. As a PAR I had a power relationship over them and knew that there were going to be times when my children will not be willing to talk to me, when they will have their own value judgments about something, or when I will not necessarily be granted access to specific data on sensitive topics. Another issue that I was concerned about was the possibility of my children using this research to 'blackmail' me in order to take advantage of the situation.

All this could create tensions trying to balance my role as a researcher and as a parent. However, I reassured them about their right to disagree, and the lack of consequences derived, and I also reassured myself in my drive to contribute to the field because 'research is neither a basic right nor necessity' (Ensign, 2003, p.43).

My second ethical concern dealt with confidentiality and anonymity, which are integral to the research process (Cohen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, I felt that they could not be guaranteed in my particular PAR context (Ensign, 2003), and in the use of a case study method, because there was a potential risk to identify my children and link them to the data they provided. Singleton & Straits, (1999, p. 524) explain that one way of ensuring confidentiality is 'by removing names and other identifying information from the data as soon as possible, by not disclosing individuals' identities in any reports of the study, and by not divulging the information to persons, organisations requesting it without the research participant's permission'. Consequently, I replaced the names of my daughters with pseudonyms, and I eliminated potential identifiers. But still, I realised it was very easy to trace them through

their schools, places of residence, or through me, because the contextual identifiers in individuals' life stories remain.

Anonymity means not disclosing the participant's identity (Grinyer, 2002), but according to Singleton & Straits (1999) it is not a 100 per cent achievable, and sometimes what a researcher decides not to disclose may be important for later analysis. Therefore, changing names did not seem enough to me, and ultimately, I realised that I could only assure in this research a certain degree of anonymity. Therefore, if the role of the researcher is to show transparency, 'this is better achieved by frankness' (Wolfe, 2003, p.3). I placed the importance in trust between my daughters and I to ensure the best possible ethical practices:

'Research subjects should be told that good scholarship requires trust between writers and readers, and that such trust is best achieved when no promises or anonymity are made. Most people would understand and cooperate, and social scientists would no longer have to engage in deceptive practices, no matter how innocent the deception'.

(Ibid)

As a PAR it was a challenge to compromise data collection and disclosure. I knew I had gained approval from my university ethics review board when the thesis proposal was submitted, but I was now facing specific ethical dilemmas related to data collection, data cleaning (data that does not contain information that identifies respondents), and dissemination.

I found that the literature on ethical codes did not offer the specific and practical guidance I was looking for (BERA, 2011; Wiles et al., 2006), and I felt I was left with only two options: either to bear the burden of deciding

which data could identify my children and then how to alter that data or obtaining additional consent.

In my search for answers to my dilemmas, I came across an article by Karen Keiser (2010) which suggested an 'alternative approach' that I summarize below.

First, she advises to think carefully about the potential audience with whom the researcher will be sharing the data. As Kaiser (2009, p.5) points out, 'it is easier when the intended use of data is clear and specific'. In my case other researchers in the field but also policy makers, parents, teachers, and teenagers themselves were my priority in benefiting from my study. For that purpose, I created a table on intended dissemination of my research included in Appendix I.

Second, the fact of considering participants as audience, which I was already doing in my methods by making sure that all the information provided by the participants was submitted to their approval and discussion prior to make it public in potential publications or any kind of presentations. Therefore, I gave my children control over the data collected, with opportunities to review and amend it, and most important, challenge my interpretations of it. For example, regarding 'romantic relationships' that might play a role in their multiliteracy practices and identity construction, I felt that the boundaries had to be set somewhere, and my daughters were not comfortable sharing this information, so it was decided not to include it in the data of this study. Also, I tried to respect their wishes for timings to share information with the inclusion of specific written rules (Appendix B). Finally, Marie (16) did not

want me to share any photos in which she or her friends did not look nice according to her criteria.

Negotiating with my daughters the scope of the observations, the boundaries to respect from both sides, managing my own frustrations if they were not willing to cooperate in some circumstances, and establishing the clearest standards possible regarding making data public, helped to guide my research and dealt with these problematic situations. In a word, I was giving my daughters the choice to determine what they wanted to keep confidential. In answer to this, I adapted Kaiser's (2010) example of her post interview confidentiality form that I called 'post data collection and analysis confidentiality form' included in Appendix H.

Finally, in the event that I have more doubts about the nature of the information that I could use I would consult my supervisor for guidance. I am also engaged to keep electronic and written information strictly confidential, subject to the limitations of the law, and to be accessed only by me as the researcher. I keep all hard copy data store securely in a locked cabinet at home, and all data will be destroyed after a period of five years once this study is completed.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

The data collection for this case study took place for 6 months beginning in December 2015 in France and for 1 month in India and Holland. I adopted a qualitative approach to answering the research questions and data for this research was collected through both online and offline interactions

integrating four ethnographic methods in order to triangulate the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

(1) Descriptive and reflective field notes from participant observations (Appendices, C and D)

(2) Casual conversations (Appendix, E)

(3) Examples of multiliteracy practices (artifacts)

(4) Feedback from participants (Appendix, F)

Data was then coded and categorised thematically based on Ito et al.'s (2010) framework of analysis adapted to this study (Figure 3.1).

3.5.1 Observations and Field Notes

Marshall & Rossman (1989, p.79) define observation as 'the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study'. Fieldwork involves 'active looking, improving memory, informal interviewing, writing detailed field notes, and perhaps most importantly, patience' (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p.vii). Werner et al. (cited in Angrosino & DePerez, 2000, p.677) focus on the processes of conducting observations and describe three types:

1. *Descriptive observation*, in which one observes anything and everything.

2. *Focused observation*, emphasizes observation supported by interviews, in which the participants' insights guide the researcher's decisions about what to observe.
3. *Selective observation* considered the most systematic in which the researcher focuses on different types of activities to help delineate the differences in those activities.

I conducted the three types of observations on the participants in this study at home, in their free time, mainly after school in weekdays, at weekends or during school holidays. The observations took place regularly during 6 months in France and later during approximately 1 month in India, and online with my elder daughter, who was already living in Amsterdam. In France, sometimes both participants were present, others just one, and sometimes the exchanges and observations happened online through WhatsApp, email or messenger.

Field notes were taken right after the observations to ensure the accuracy of what was observed and the concrete details (Appendix, D). I used a template for comprehensive note-taking (Appendix C) retrieved from <http://elmsa.org/assets/images/resources/Template for Taking Field Notes.pdf>, and I followed Spradley (1980) and Lofland & Lofland (1984) criteria lists, which included, date, site, activity taking place, participants, length of observation, a summary of the events including analytic description and a short narrative of what I had observed. There were times, when I was immersed in daily activities with my children and the use of the templates felt inappropriate. In these occasions I took mental notes and jotted down

hints made up of key words, little phrases, quotes, and symbols than were transcribed as soon as possible (Appendix E).

I used Ito et al.'s (2010) framework of analysis where codes were already specified, and therefore I did not follow an approach in which 'codes emerged' from the data collected. Nevertheless, I left doors open to any other codes that could come from my specific data and were not represented in Ito et al.'s (2010) analysis and which resulted in the thematic map on Chapter Four.

In order to triangulate the data, I used a table (see table 3.6) for each participant in which I had three types of field notes: descriptive notes, in which I drew no conclusions from the observations made (mainly what I had noted on the template). Personal notes, in which I wrote down the assumptions I made, based on the observations and my prior knowledge, and finally, triangulation notes, in which I triangulated my observations with other data collected from participants through casual conversations, observation or artifacts.

Table 3.6: Example of Observations carried for each Participant and Field Notes

Participants	Descriptive Field Notes	Personal Field Notes	Triangulation
Ana (18)	April, 5pm Ana is in the kitchen having a snack after school with her laptop on the table, she is watching one of her favourite series on Netflix	This may be because she finds this time as a relaxing one after school or because she is following this TV series with friends to share later...	<u>WhatsApp message to friends:</u> 'it was super cool the episode today, bitches do not dare to watch anymore!'
Marie (16)	April, 9pm Marie is in the bathroom listening to loud music while taking a shower, I am nearby and I can hear her phone going 'pin', 'pin' 'pin' as messages arrive	I wonder if these are these personal messages from friends or school ones from classmates checking on homework. She keeps connected even in the shower...	<u>Respondents' validation: casual conversation:</u> After shower, 'it depends, today it was both, the maths teacher is sick, it is on the school web, someone just saw it and WhatsApp me'

Further in the data analysis Chapter Four, I state that I paid attention to salient aspects in recording field notes. I therefore noted whatever information I considered striking or more noteworthy. Of course, what makes an observation salient is highly subjective, so the main guidelines were my research questions and information that could answer them or refute them as well, the literature review, and my framework of analysis. According to Wolfinger (2002, p.89) several rules of thumb apply in note-taking, namely 'paying attention to deviant cases, which become deviant with respect to the researcher's tacit expectations or when the particular event is deviant compared to others that are considered to be the norm in the literature'.

3.5.2 Casual Conversations

The conversations run naturally but I found myself sometimes ‘forcing’ questions on the participants related to my field of research. I was not very successful as my children could tell immediately what I was trying to achieve. So, I decided to stop and let things flow following a more natural non-interventionist approach. I was worried about not being able to collect enough data to answer my research questions but as ‘saturation’ is a naturally occurring event I figured out that data collection would show when there was nothing new to note (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The fact of worrying about collecting enough data is something that the researcher faces only when the actual data collection process begins (Bryman, 2012) therefore there is not much he/she can do to foresee this concern. These casual conversations, for example while having dinner or relaxing, were neither recorded nor analysed, but helped me to triangulate the data, and as springboards for observation in my field notes and data analysis. These notes were informal and consisted of a scribbled key word or phrase and a description of the situation and theme. Table 3.7 shows the process. An example of the original hand-written notes is included in Appendix E.

Table 3.7: Example of Notes on Casual Conversations

	Casual Conversations
Ana (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Talking about part time jobs, and how she registered online in a babysitter and dog sitter site for wk. and holidays, she will use it for work experience in university CV. <p>Constructing Identity for university applications, messing around, connecting in and out-of-school worlds... showing likes (dogs and kids)</p>
Marie (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Showing photos of an Instagram account with the type of images she likes and how she will try on her the same kind of photos for her account <p>Identity, geeking out? Communities of practice (do develop)</p>

3.5.3 Examples of Multiliteracy Practices

Examples of multimodal literacy practices were also part of the data collection process together with examples of multilingual text messages, photo, and video editing and sharing in social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and the school sites for both participants. These were used in order to understand what kind of multiliteracy practices were taking place, and how they related to identity issues in in and out-of-school practices. I was particularly interested in moments that can be considered as ‘turning points’ (Bruner, 1994; Hughes & Morrison, 2014), where participants expressed and presented themselves differently and started to develop an awareness of the identity-construction process and/or what it means to be media producers rather than simply consumers. Table 3.8 summarises my daughters’ multimodal multiliteracy practices. I looked into their SNSs use, school sites, and related them to Ito et al.’s (2010) framework of analysis employed in the data analysis and discussion. I

correlated the social media sites used by the participants with Ito et al.'s (2010) analysis of genres of participation that I could see represented in my data, that is to say friendship driven or interests driven practices. Then, I took into consideration the degree of commitment, if they were mainly using those sites to socialise, to mess around or to further develop an interest or geek out. I related the practices to the other themes in the framework, namely, networked publics, the multimodal examples of new literacy media produced and peer-based learning. I did not include in the table the theme related to the gap between in and out-of-school practices because this one derived directly from coding my data and not from Ito et al.'s (2010) framework. Finally, based on other studies included in the literature review and the data collected, I addressed their relevance for identity construction.

Table 3.8: Multimodal Multiliteracy and Identity Construction Practices

Digital Form	Genres of Participation	Degree of Commitment	Networked Publics	New Media Literacy	Peer Based Learning	Identity Construction
FB	Friendship driven/Interest driven	Hanging out/ Messing around	Community building, multilingual	Sound, moving, images, texts	Yes	Yes
Photo/ Video Editing YouTube	Interest driven	Messing around/ geeking out	Cultural remixing/ Informal learning	Photos, videos, music, Texts	Yes	Yes
Instagram	Interest driven	Messing around Geeking out	Community building	Photos, texts	Yes	Yes
Snapchat	Friendship driven	Hanging out	Community building	Texts	Yes	Yes
WhatsApp Texts messages Messenger	Friendship driven	Hanging out	Family, Friends	Texts, photos, audios	Yes	Yes
School sites	Interest driven	Messing around Geeking out	Homework, exchange with teachers (not perceived as community building)	School Portfolio, written essays, not linked to friendships or desired interests but driven by an interest	No	No

3.5.4 Feedback from Participants on Data Collected

Respondents' validation looked to seek confirmation that my findings and impressions were congruent with the views of those studied, it was a way to seek out areas in which there was a lack of correspondence and the reasons for it (Bryman, 2012), and finally, a way also to deal with ethical issues of confidentiality. A few of the posts that were initially exchanged in response to participants' requests, and some misunderstandings were also corrected. I had to be cautious about possible defensive reactions from my daughters, in respect to their reluctance to be critical because of the special relation between us (Bloor, 1997), and the question of whether they were able or not to validate my research analysis in the case they did not understand it (Hobbs, 1993). Therefore, I had to be very precise with the language I used, and the demands to be the least biased possible. Nevertheless, counting on the participants' voices was important for me in the study as a way also of expressing their identities, and as a way to understand their views on their digital multiliteracy practices and identities. As this is a study that is based on multimodality, the respondents' validation was encouraged in different multimodal ways. An example of Ana's (18) respondents validation in answer to my comments about her identity construction related to national identity (football and Spanish food) is included in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Example of Multimodal Respondent 's Validation (Ana)



Similarly, Marie's (16) respondents validation in Figure 3.4, using an emoticon in response to a conversation in the WhatsApp family group when I posted by mistake on her FB page.

Figure 3.4: Example of Multimodal Respondent's Validation (Marie)



' This is how I feel, my reputation and work!'

(My translation):

‘- MUM, YOU ARE PUBLISHING WITH MY FACEBOOK STOP PLS

- What are you doing

- Can you make sure before publishing things please?!!

- Delete it now!

- Mum

- The embarrassment, stop!

- Take it out!!!

- Don't publish anything with the iPhone 5 that there is my account!! ‘

3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative research seeks to understand social phenomena in natural settings giving due emphasis to the meanings, experiences and views of the participants (Pope & Mays, 1995). Data analysis moves into some kind of understanding or interpretation of the situations being studied. I decided to use Ito et al.'s (2010) framework of analysis set out in *Hanging Out, Messing Around and Geeking Out* to code my data. Ito et al.'s (2010) study was based on 3 years of observations and interviews by a team of multiple researchers in a large population of American teenagers regarding their daily online media practices. They looked into everyday hanging out behaviour on different social media sites to more geek out kinds of participation such as making YouTube videos, remixing videos, podcasts etc. as examples of multiliteracy and identity construction practices in informal and formal contexts.

In this study, first I did intensive reading of my field notes coming from observations and looked into artifacts to code and map all to the adapted Ito's framework of analysis described in Figure 3.1. Then I looked into the

mapping for confirming or disconfirming evidence or alternative explanations of my findings in relation to the framework. All the data collected was independent from the framework of analysis taken from Ito et al.'s (2010) at the time of collection, only once the analysis started I applied the themes from the framework but continued to be opened to other themes that I could identify in other to answer my research questions. In the analysis I also took into consideration my personal stance in Chapter One that guided my study. As an example, some of the points there have since then softened. In number 2 in which I stated that: 'participants can identify and discuss their literacy activities', proved to be misleading as in the case of my daughters some of the multimodal multiliteracy activities were not even understood as such by them, in general those that were not written, which shows how rooted the understanding of literacy is still mainly associated with writing and reading, and especially, writing and reading in school. The data included in the data analysis chapter followed the idea of a significant event or 'turning points' (Bruner, 1994) discussed in p. 128 the literature review, the research questions, and the framework of analysis as it was impossible for me to collect data for each and one of the observations or casual conversations that took place during the observation period. I decided to take into account events that had a significant meaning in relation to the framework of analysis for digital identity construction and literacy and the research questions. For example, I wrote quite a long field note about the day when my younger daughter, Marie (16) remove me from her FB page because I tagged a comment to one of her photos. This was a significant noteworthy event in relation to networked publics and peers. My daughter was not expecting

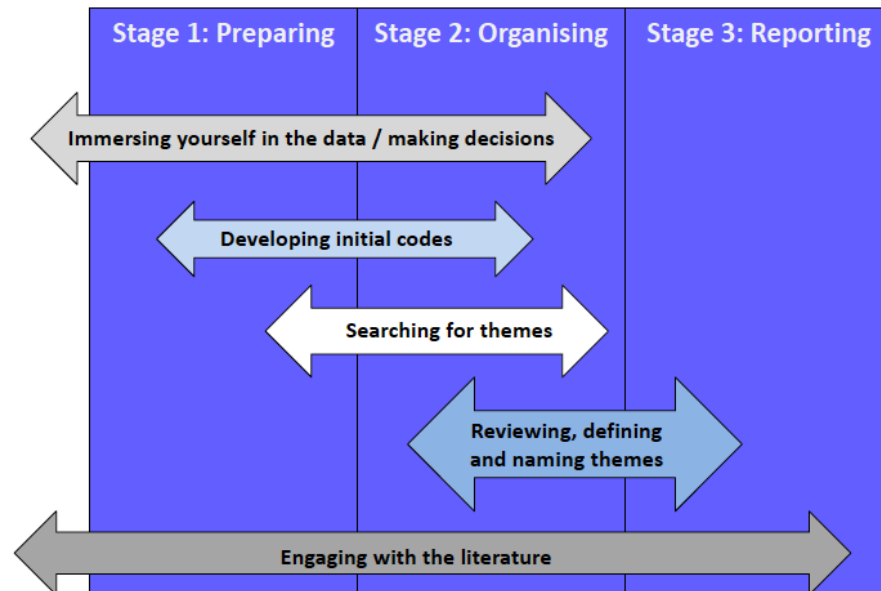
from me to tag her photos; I was not part of her intended audience. I was indicating belonging to a peer group to which I did not belong. It was her way to show identity construction by positioning: 'this is my space, do not mess with it as a parent because you do not belong in here'. This was a 'turning point' in her identity construction because it showed her developmental stage by claiming independence, and by setting limits to the invasion of her privacy in a public space that was meant exclusively for her peers.

Following the analysis, I employed thematic analysis because 'it identifies, analyses, and reports themes within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6), it captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and 'represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82). Thematic analysis can be used to provide a detailed and nuanced account of one or more particular themes related to the research questions or areas of interest within the data. It has the advantage of allowing theoretical freedom related to the analysis because it enables the researcher to determine themes in a number of ways. This will lead to a deductive top-down way of analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes 1997) guided by the particular theoretical or analytical interest in the area. In the case of this study, the interest was around the digital multiliteracy and identity construction practices in out-of-school contexts. Some researchers state that themes 'emerge' from the analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), but I agree more with Taylor & Ussher (2001) in that themes 'emerging' or being 'discovered' seem as a passive account of the process of analysis and denies the active role the researcher always plays in identifying themes. The themes

in this study were guided by my research questions and by Ito et al.'s (2010) ethnographic study. For example, they identified the importance of genres of participation in relation to multiliteracy practices and identity construction in teenagers. Therefore, in my analysis, I looked for data that evidenced this pattern such as examples of these kinds of practices and their implication in multiliteracy and identity matters. Even though I have used a framework of analysis where main themes were already established, this did not prevent me from coding my data. The steps that I took moved back and forward through the analysis. I started by immersing myself in the data and making decisions about it (stages 1 & 2), establishing the open initial coding (stages 1 & 2) in which I went back to data and made decisions again. I continued the analysis by developing the codes (stages 1 & 2), going over those codes again, searching for themes and continuing the iterative process of thematic analysis (stages 1 & 2), reviewing, defining and naming themes (stages 2 & 3), and engaging with the literature throughout the whole process of analysis (stages, 1, 2 and 3) (Boyd, 2012). As Bazeley (2009, p.6) claims themes only attain full significance when they are linked to form a coordinated picture or an explanatory model: 'describe, compare, and relate'.

Figure 3.4: Data Analysis Process (Boyd, N., 2012)

An iterative approach to analysis



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3.8 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter presented a detailed account of the philosophical approach adopted, and the chosen research design, namely a qualitative approach within an exploratory paradigm. Data collection methods employed in the study and the subsequent data analysis procedures were outlined, as well as the particular ethical considerations, and issues relating to the quality of the research. Findings derived from observations and field notes, casual conversations, examples of online production of the participants' digital multiliteracies and identity practices, and participants' validation will be presented and analysed thematically in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the purpose of this study which is to learn more about how the out-of-school multiliteracy practices in two teenagers shape their identity through multimodal resources, how their multiliteracy practices are shaped by identity construction, and how all these articulate in relation to academic settings. It considers the meaning behind participants' experiences while situating them within the fields of existing research to demonstrate how they may extend current knowledge. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and discuss what the data and the perspectives of participants have revealed. The three research questions are answered in the following analysis section by relating them to the main themes in an integrated manner where analysis and discussion follow each other in the same chapter. Five dominant themes guided the analysis and are summarised hereby:

1. Genre of participation: Friendship or Interest driven practices
2. Networked publics
3. Peer based learning
4. New media literacy learning
5. Gap between in and out-of-school practices

Related sub-themes associated to dominant themes are fully represented in Figure 4.1. Table 4.1 summarises the analysis section that illustrates the out-of-school multiliteracy practices that I observed in the participants' digital environments and the purpose they served, it explains how they used them

for identity construction, and the relationship between the out-of-school digital practices and the ones taking place in school settings. It displays an analysis of data collected online and offline from observations and field notes, casual conversations, and digital multimodal artifacts. Key themes were related to the framework of analysis from the literature review on Ito et al.'s (2010) study, and a new theme (5) was developed from data in the current study. Appendix G, explains the process of data reduction that is illustrated in the thematic map in Figure 4.1, p. 140. Although I use a framework of analysis already established, there were subthemes associated to those key themes that came from data in this specific study and developed further than Ito's original framework. To help with the analysis, I used table 4.1 in which I associated the main themes (1 to 5) to examples of literacy and identity construction practices taken from the data and that were of aid in developing the subthemes and establishing the connexion among all five key themes. I organised the table in sets of practices that were friendship driven, interest driven and different from school. The last column relates to identity and explains how themes and subthemes impact on participants' identity construction. All the themes and subthemes are explained in detail in the following sections of the current chapter.

Figure 4.1: Thematic map illustrating key themes taken from Ito et al.'s (2010) and from data in present study

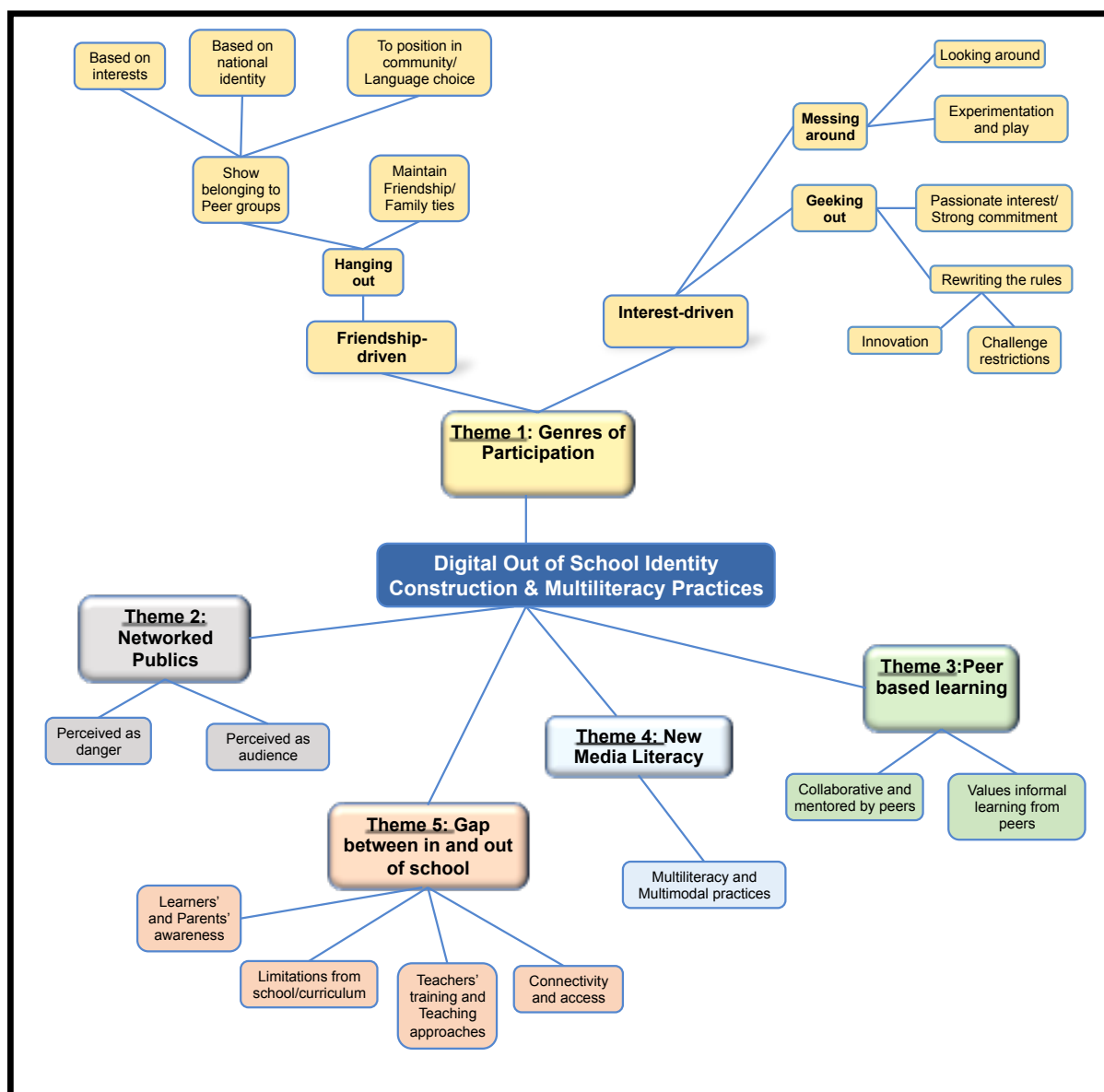


Table 4.1: Themes & Specific Examples of Multiliteracy and Identity Construction

Themes	Literacies Friendship Driven	Literacies Interest Driven	Out-of-School different from in School Literacies	Identity Construction
1. Genre of Participation	Maintain friendships with family and friends Show belonging to peer groups Hanging out activities	<u>Messing around</u> : Looking for information on interest themes, hobbies, keep family ties, expressing ideologies <u>Geeking out</u> : More technical interests, Passion, Innovation	New media literacy practices at home taken to school with different outcomes, Limitations from schools, curriculum, teachers	Friends as actors for socialising and identity: SNSs languages, shows cultural belonging, (skaters for Ana, fashion for Marie). Editing photos Marie (16), Ana (18) expert streaming, or playing the piano YouTube
2. Networked Publics (Audiences on and off line)	Profiles Public commenting tools, friends lists, Status updates	Publics engage in a particular interests. YouTube. Provides new kinds of public spaces to interact and receive feedback	School publics more restricted and usually seen as negative due to possible negative consequences	Totally aware of public audience consequences for the future, modeling career (Marie 16). Ideological implications for Ana (18)
3-Peer-based learning	Fosters friendships through collaboration, mentoring	Fosters interests and values peer knowledge	Contrast in school, where peer learning and communities of practice are not the norm for learning	Prestige in the community and feedback from peers
4. New Media Literacy Learning	Developed through media production & online communication. Mashups, remix, videoblogs. Multi modal multiliterate, non linear, & integrated	Videos for birthdays, family holidays, Ana asking Marie photo editing. Streaming, finding films on line that are new, and teaching parents	Multiliteracy used for school subjects, presentations, music as poetry, videos, multimodal	I am the music I listen, the videos I post, the images I project, the things I write, the languages I use. My photos in instagram, the way the lay out is done, the photos I select, the editing I do...
5. Gap between in and out-of-school	Multiliteracy valued, but still more importance to written Learners want to preserve practices private, not integrated in school I do not want to do the same things at school as in my free time but I don't want to be blocked	How online interest-driven literacies are valued at school? They can learn languages, or to play the piano by musical scores on YouTube tutorials, look for information on any subject, gaming, communities of practice	Any kind of theme can be found, learn to see which one is reliable, question things, authority of the teacher challenged: if you do not believe me google it! How to integrate in formal education? Teachers training and teaching approach needs to include multiliteracies. Connectivity issues in schools and banning. Needs to meet learners' real needs. Parents and teens attitudes play a role	I am the same in an out-of-school, there is no gap, there are only limitations, restrictions imposed by school, teachers. The gap is artificial, I want the freedom to choose, and express myself, that is the only gap. I am my offline and online me.

4.1 Genres of Participation

Theme 1 in the framework of analysis is concerned with genres of participation. This gender-based approach to practices is centred on participation and not confined to understanding practices in a categorical way, but as a set of characteristics that are constantly under negotiation as teenagers experiment with new modes of communication and culture. Genres of participation reflect teenagers' practices, learning and identity construction and help to understand their participation in social groups and cultural affiliations. According to Ito et al., (2010, p.36) genres of participation describe 'different levels of investments in new media activities in a way that integrates an understanding of technical, social and cultural patterns'. It emphasizes modes of participation with media, not categories of individuals.

These genres of participation are embedded in teenagers' multiliteracy practices which are driven by a purposeful aim of engaging in communication, by the importance of an audience that provides feedback, as well as by the opportunities to do so. Genres of participation are present in social acts happening in specific and diverse social contexts driven by the need to communicate and built on the existing social and cultural practices of young people exchanging multimodal texts as part of their everyday lives. Never before a generation has written, posted, published, read, shared content as much as this one (Lunsford et al., 2017). Still, many adults (educators, researchers, parents...) worry and wonder about what teenagers are doing online because they see these practices as a waste of time, as

playing online or as just carrying small talk with strangers. But on the other hand, the modes of participation in the digital world in which these teenagers are immersed are providing them with new opportunities to explore and deepen interests, to develop technical skills, to deal with social norms in different ways than the ones from former generations and to use, create and share content employing varied modes for self-expression. They relate socially to offline and online friends, they experiment with self-directed and peer learning and have a taste at independence from their parents, all these endeavours with positive and negative implications. However, in agreement with Ito et al., (2010) this study has confirmed that participants use online networks to extend the offline friendships that they hold in the familiar settings of their closer environments such as school, sports, or any other activities in which they may be involved in their daily lives. They 'hang out' mainly with people they know or have met physically in a way that adds something to their personal lives.

'I think I know all the people I talk to as a friend online'.

(Ana, 18)

*'I do not become friends with no matter who, if I don't know them
I do not accepted them as friends'.*

(Marie, 16)

I am not denying with this claim that there are situations in which teenagers feel threaten, bullied or overwhelmed by the internet, and these situations do have to be acknowledged and handled seriously in and out-of-school settings. However, this does not prevent teenagers now from using digital

environments and will not either in a near or distant future. This is why studies like the present one are needed so that we can understand behaviours and foresee risks and problems in order to ensure a safe digital environment.

In the present study, as in others mentioned in the literature review (Boyd, 2014; Ito et al., 2010; Thomas, 2007) genres of participation were a consistent pattern in the data collected and were used by the participants to develop their multimodal literacies and construct identity. Participants' interpretations of genres of participation and subsequent implications for multiliteracy and identity construction are discussed under the following sub-themes:

- Friendship-driven genres of participation
- Interest-driven genres of participation

4.1.1 Friendship-driven Practices

This section deals specifically with friendship-driven practices derived from the main theme of genres of participation in the frame analysis, and the two main sub-categories and that are part of hanging out activities:

- Maintaining individual friendships
- Showing belonging to peer groups

The literacies that the participants in this study use the most outside school take place in social networking sites where they engage in multiliteracy practices with others in a multimodal way. Whether it is with mobile texting,

instant messaging, or Facebook, they have taken to digital media as a way of keeping in constant contact with their peers and friends.

'The last thing I do at night before going to sleep is to check messages on my phone, the first thing in the morning the same.'

(Ana, 18)

'When I need to concentrate to study for an exam I have to disconnect or turn off the phone, otherwise I am checking all the time.'

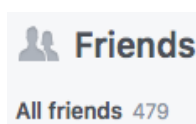
(Marie, 16)

Therefore, friendship-driven genres of participation were one of the consistent themes occurring in the data in this study. Both my daughters showed in their multidigital practices what an important role maintaining friendships and communicating with friends from different locations had in their literacies. Writing, posting music, recording voice messages, sharing photos, videos, commenting posts, using Skype, etc., were multimodal multiliteracy practices employed to fulfil two main purposes in friendship driven practices: to maintain individual friendships, and to show belonging to peer groups. Expressing oneself online contributes to reflect on beliefs, values and self-perceptions and helps to cope with one's sense of identity. Both participants reflected in their multimodal digital literacy practices how they were achieving it. Hanging-out activities provided opportunities to:

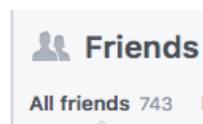
- Develop and maintain social contacts online and offline with friends, family, and peers... using multiliteracy practices
- Spend time sharing and developing their culture with friends and peers

- They occur in multiple digital contexts at the same time (WhatsApp, FB, messenger, Instagram, etc.)
- Media content is at the core of their communication and identity construction
- Shift continuously from and to peer/ friendship-based groups
- Help identity construction

Maintaining individual friendships



(Ana, 18)



(Marie, 16)

Street (2001, p.430) in the literature in Chapter Two recognises multiliteracies as a social practice built on the assumption that it requires detailed in-depth account of actual practices in different cultural settings emphasizing the real-world contexts in which people use literacy. Facebook, Instagram, and online blogs, are key areas in teenagers' multimodal communication where literacy is developed (Cope & Kalantzis, 2008; Rowsell, 2013). In line with the literature, both participants in this study have had a FB page for a few years and made use regularly of other SNSs sites such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube to communicate. Consequently, most of their out-of-school multiliteracy practices took place in these digital spaces to maintain individual friendships, and to connect with 'real friends' and family left behind in their diaspora community in different countries (Ito et al., 2010; Steward, 2014). Multimodality was present in the

participants' multiliteracy practices in the form of written or recorded messages, but also with photos, music and videos, or commenting or not on other people's posts (Carrington, 2005; Hagood, 2003; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Lankshear & Knobel, 2002; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006). Although these practices are not limited exclusively to adolescents corroborate the assertion that for them 'literacy is multimodal and rather than receive information from static texts, they actively create meaning dynamically across diverse media to serve different purposes' (Hagood, et al., 2002, p.75).

Teenagers use different SNSs and modes of communication to serve friendships; in this study the participants made use of four main social media: FB, WhatsApp, Instagram and YouTube. The analysis of the data made salient patterns that shed light on the purposes and ways of achieving it. The number of friends in Ana's (18) and Marie's (16) FB profiles represented in the previous page do not correspond to 'real friends', according to them, they are friends of friends that had been added to their FB site and which represent mainly an audience and not the people with which they usually interact

'I do not really consider all those as friends, but it is good for the number of likes and so'

(Ana, 18)

Presenting oneself online using social networking sites requires purposeful selection of text, pictures, and audio... in order to create the impression they wish to create, usually the improved version (Miller & Arnold, 2003).

'I do not post everything, I think before'

(Marie, 16)

There is evidence in the literature that different SNSs are used for different social purposes and are related to personality characteristics, for instance FB to stay connected with one social network and instant messaging for relationship maintenance and development (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Hughes et al., 2012, Mark & Ganzach, 2014). This is the case in this study where personal choices determine participants' uses of SNSs.

Interestingly, Ana (18) has fewer friends than Marie, but is actually more active on FB than her younger sister.

'I check my FB at least a couple of times a day, or more'

(Ana, 18)

For Ana (18) FB is about keeping in touch with friends and seeing other family member's posts:

'I am on FB just to see what is going on with family and friends, (...) it helps me to get in touch with friends in any part of the world'

(Ana, 18)

Marie (16) on the other hand, thinks FB is a waste of time, popular mainly amongst older people, and used only to 'frimer': show off. She has changed her last name on her profile to avoid people finding her; also, her main page does not contain any background images of herself, her likes or hobbies compare to her elder sister. Marie prefers Instagram, for the photos, there are no memes, and most of her friends communicate through it.

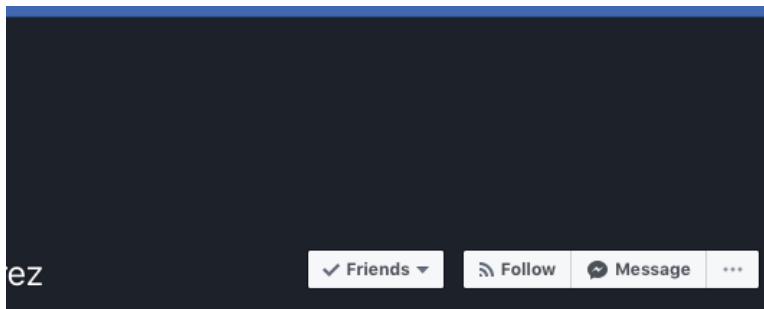
'FB is not used anymore, at least I don't use it and my friends either, it is a waste of time'

(Marie, 16)

Figure 4.2: Ana's (18) Profile page background image on FB



Figure 4.3: Marie's (16) Profile page background image on FB



For Marie (16) moving to India in 2016 and leaving behind all her friends, her school, and her social environment proved to be a thorny issue to tackle. Going on FB then provided her with chances to keep in contact with friends and continue to develop those friendships. To achieve it, she employed multiple modes of literacy such as more posting of photos and videos, written and recorded messages remembering the time spent together with friends in France. It also showed that FB for her represented a ‘substitute of physical presence’ with friends due to her moving and concurred with the literature in that teenagers connect and develop friendships mainly with people they already know from their close physical environment even if they are no longer physically present (Ito et al., 2010):

‘I am on FB with my friends. Well I wouldn’t have to go if we hadn’t moved. Why didn’t you ask me about this, why didn’t you ask for my opinion, this sucks, you never count on me!’

(Marie 16)

Figure 4.4: Example of messages after Marie moved to India

I miss you and i love you so here's a little throwback to when we lived in the same country... see ya soon 🍷🍷🍷

These transnational practices trespass physical spaces and coincide with the literature in that teenagers perceive the online world as an extension of the offline one (Boyd, 2008). For instance, Marie (16) told me one day that she was going to have lunch with a couple of friends from France. I assumed that they were, for whatever reason, visiting India, but to my surprise I found my daughter in her room alone in front of her laptop eating. The three friends were having lunch ‘online’ ! Different settings offline put together through

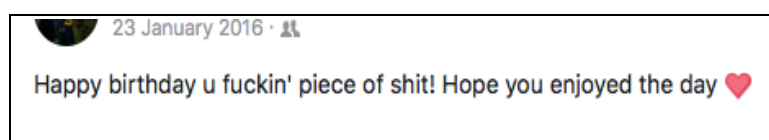
online communication. My daughter did not feel the need to tell me that that lunch was going to happen virtually, for her it was just as real.

FB, Facetime, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, were ways for Marie (16) to develop multiliteracies to connect to offline friends and socialise regularly with them in a continuous online mode. But both teenagers in this research separate audiences and use social media accordingly. Having different audiences impacts in their multiliteracy practices as well. Goffman (1990) asserts that in different social situations, across various contexts, we simultaneously attempt to manipulate the impression that others make of us, while actively obtaining information to draw opinions about others. We can interpret participants' SNSs updates as a 'performance' to give the audience the chance to form an impression of them and ultimately contribute to the participants' identity construction.

In both participants FB was not used to connect with family members but for teenage cousins, it was more a space to develop and maintain friendships outside the family circle. The literature confirms that young people tend to avoid their parents and other adults while using SNSs, but the reality is that families do come together around new media (Ito et al. 2010, Boyd, 2012), and data from the present study suggest the same. For instance, I was able to befriend both my daughters on FB, but I did not have their permission to tag, like or comment on their posts. I was not allowed either to publish photos of them on my FB account without their consent. Of course, I do not belong to their peer groups, neither am I considered 'a friend'. Probably I will not even understand the subtle connotations of their posts. On top of all that,

according to my daughters, it is not seen as ‘cool’ to have your parents commenting on your posts or photos because it will prevent friends from expressing themselves freely in messages like the one in figure 4.5. Teenagers in this study and in the literature (Boyd, 2008) want publics of peers, not publics where parents lurk. This is also an aspect of identity construction as research indicates that the adolescence is a period where friends and peers become more influential and family takes a secondary role (Larson & Richards, 1991).

Figure 4.5: *Friend’s comment as example of friend’s language*



Despite not wanting to mingle with parents in social media, SNSs are used in a parallel way to maintain family ties and communicate with parents or other family members. This is the case in some of the literature for digital literacy practices among immigrants (Stewart, 2014), but as well for literature that studies how families stay involved or participate in teenagers’ interests (Ito et al., 2008). Families can be understood as cultures or communities of practice in which participants construct particular ways of acting, believing and valuing through the interactions among their members. The literature explored in Chapter Two illustrated the importance of out-of-school multiliteracies shaped by the ‘funds of knowledge’ and developed in the

social spaces of home, peer groups, communities and popular culture (Moje et al., 2004; Moll et al., 1992).

In this study these practices are mainly carried out on WhatsApp where we shared two family groups: one named 'asuntos de familia' (family matters) for the four of us, and another one called 'Familia', for the extended family members who live in Spain and abroad. WhatsApp is considered by the participants less threatening than FB or Instagram as a channel to communicate with family members because the information shared is not usually related to sensitive personal issues, and it is public only to the specific members of the designated group, therefore, not opened to other networked publics. Indeed, some forms of online social networking, such as instant messaging, usually involve much smaller groups of participants and are primarily used to maintain existing friendship or family networks (Grinter & Palen, 2002).

The multiliteracy practices in these two WhatsApp groups were carried in Spanish, even though both my husband and I speak English and French, and most of the members in the extended family speak English. The reason is that Spanish is the language we use more naturally and frequently at home. The fact that the girls initiate contact in Spanish indicates a deliberate decision being made in their multilingual literacy choices determined by their 'funds of knowledge'.

In contrast with other uses of SNSs, these family groups in WhatsApp are not specifically friendship-driven, but they do share the aim to bond, connect,

and socialise together. They are used to make decisions regarding family issues, share information, and keep in contact, despite the distance. The Vodafone digital parenting guide includes research that sheds light indicating that most parents and children believe their family lives have been enriched by technology especially when distance is involved: [file://localhost/\(http://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting/advice/marco-erica-and-chiara.html\)](http://localhost/(http://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting/advice/marco-erica-and-chiara.html)). Teenagers and family relationships are also important in teenagers' interest-driven practices, as young people become often brokers of the new technology used at home and adults are accepted as peers in these communities of practice.

Showing belonging to peer groups

Peer groups help to create a sense of belonging. If identity is the construction of the self, it is also constructed by a sense of membership. Peer groups in both participants in this study seem to respond to friendship, group interests, and ideologically positioning in society as a member of a community. This is in line with the literature on group socialization theories that propose that peer groups play a major role in adolescents' socialization, which goes beyond dyadic relationships (Harris, 1995). It is reflected in findings showing that adolescents spend an increasing amount of time with peers and by their concern with obtaining social acceptance from these groups (Brown, 1990). Data in this study suggested that the key elements indicating belonging to peer groups might be categorised into three areas:

- Based on interests
- Based on national identity
- Based on language to position in the community

Peer groups foster communication and multiliteracy practices. They foster multimodal content inviting others to share and exchange. This study found as corroborated by the literature (Brown et al., 1994; Twenge, 2013) that in the case of both participants, peer groups were important actors in fostering multiliteracy related to the field of interests, national identity or belonging to a specific social group using different languages.

Peer groups based on Interests

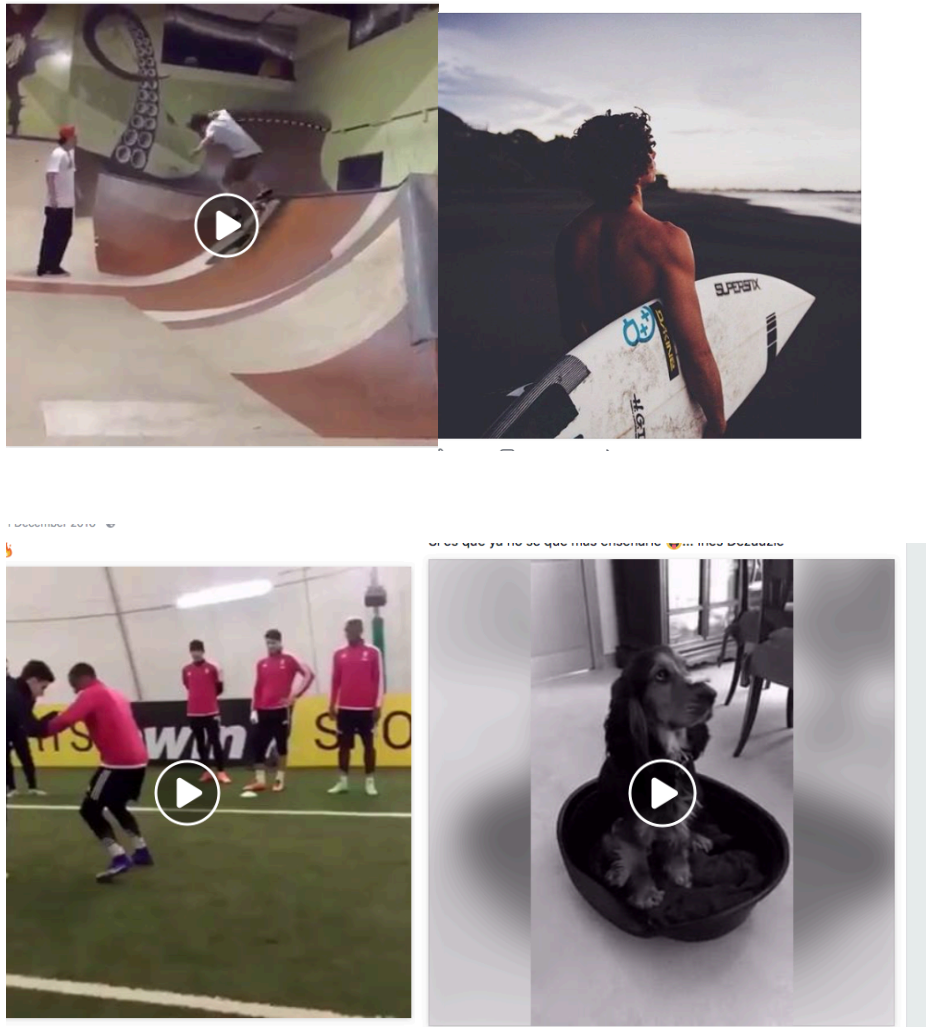
Ana (18) often posts, writes and uses photos about skating, football, surf or training her dog, which are her main hobbies. She relates to groups of peers that share these interests and interacts with them in a multimodal way through SNSs. There is also a sense of belonging to a peer group related to her university studies, which seems to play a special role in her identity construction and literacy. Therefore, belonging to peer groups that share an interest is another of the purposes of friendship-driven practices and a way to on-ramp to multiliteracy. It is about shared culture and social practice that enables new forms of creative expression (Ito et al., 2010, Livingstone, 2008). It is interesting to note that Ana (18) does not make a difference whether the peer group functions in or out-of-school settings.

'I find it very practical (talking about FB and WhatsApp) for enhancing an interaction between groups of people who share the same interests. Users can create private groups so people can comment and share amongst other members, it can be a

community of surfers or classmates helping each other out with homework for example'

(Ana, 18)

Figure 4.6: Ana's (18) examples of Interests.



Ana (18) does not only include her peer group of closer friends from her university, but also the broader community of university students, and the university institution in itself. She feels proud to show belonging to those and exhibits it by posting and giving her opinion on an article dealing with UVA

reputation as the second best worldwide university in Communication and Media studies.

Figure 4.7: *Belonging to specific peer groups on YouTube*



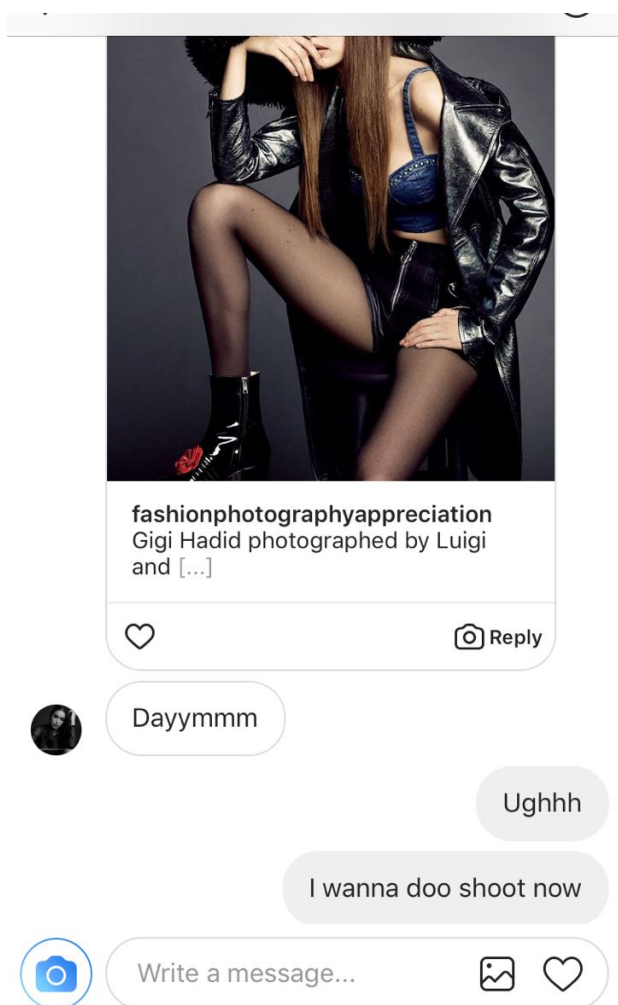
Figure 4.8: *Showing belonging to larger peer groups*



Marie (16) relates to peers who have an interest in fashion and modelling mainly on WhatsApp and Instagram. She follows several well-known models and events like the Victoria's Secret fashion show. She works now with an international modelling agency in Mumbai and has a group of peers just like

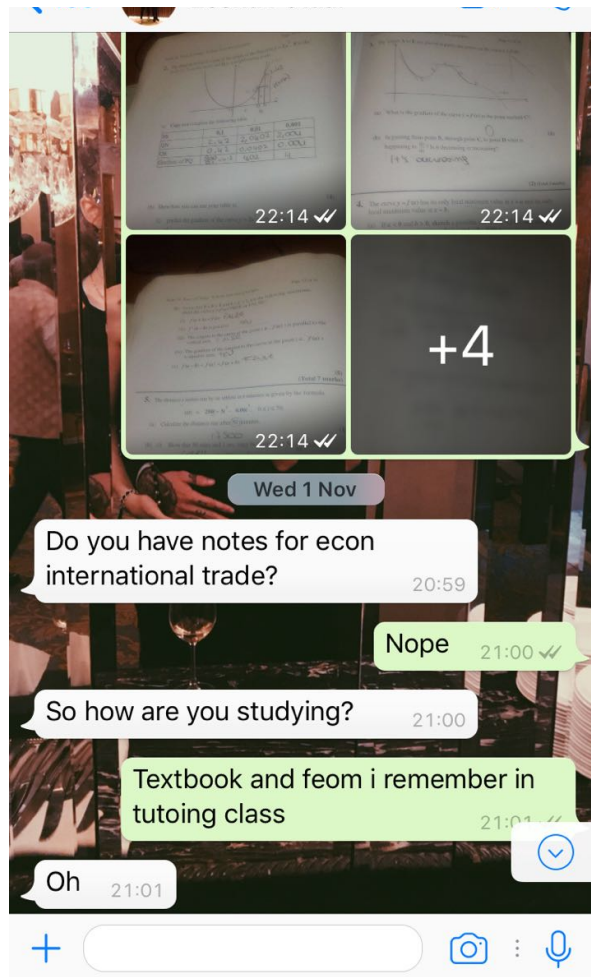
her who come from India and abroad. Her multiliteracy practices are directed to anything that has to do with this world, from negotiating contracts with her agency, to dealing with shootings or castings, posting photos and videos of herself and jobs done, and of course communicating with other models considered as friends and peers. An extensive critique of literature in Chapter Two pointed out the understanding of literacy as a social practice related to meanings grounded in real world patterns of experience, action and subjective interest (Gee, 2006, 2012). Marie's fashion peer group is different from her sister's in that it is more restrictive, in the sense that not everybody gets to be a model. It can be argued that not everybody gets to be a football player, but if I want to become one I could try. If I want to be a model there are certain imposed external demands like height, body mass, measurements, etc. that do not depend on a person's will. Peer groups that are restrictive function more as selective affiliation and have stronger links to identity construction, as my own research suggests.

Figure 4.9: Marie's (16) modelling peer group



On the other hand, Marie's (16) schoolmates with whom she only interacts for school related matters, forms more a support group in Marie's multiliteracies based exclusively on academic interests:

Figure 4.10: Example of messages from school peer group



There is little evidence in the literature on the impact of SNSs on teenagers' formal education employed to share information and work collaboratively with classmates and teachers (Anderson, 2007; Mazer, Murphy & Simonds, 2007). In this study, Marie (16) thinks that its use encourages discussion about school subjects between her and classmates, and that it improves engagement and motivation:

'It makes me work harder when I see that everybody is struggling. Also, I like to have a group to ask questions or doubts, we try to work together to find answers'

(Marie, 16)

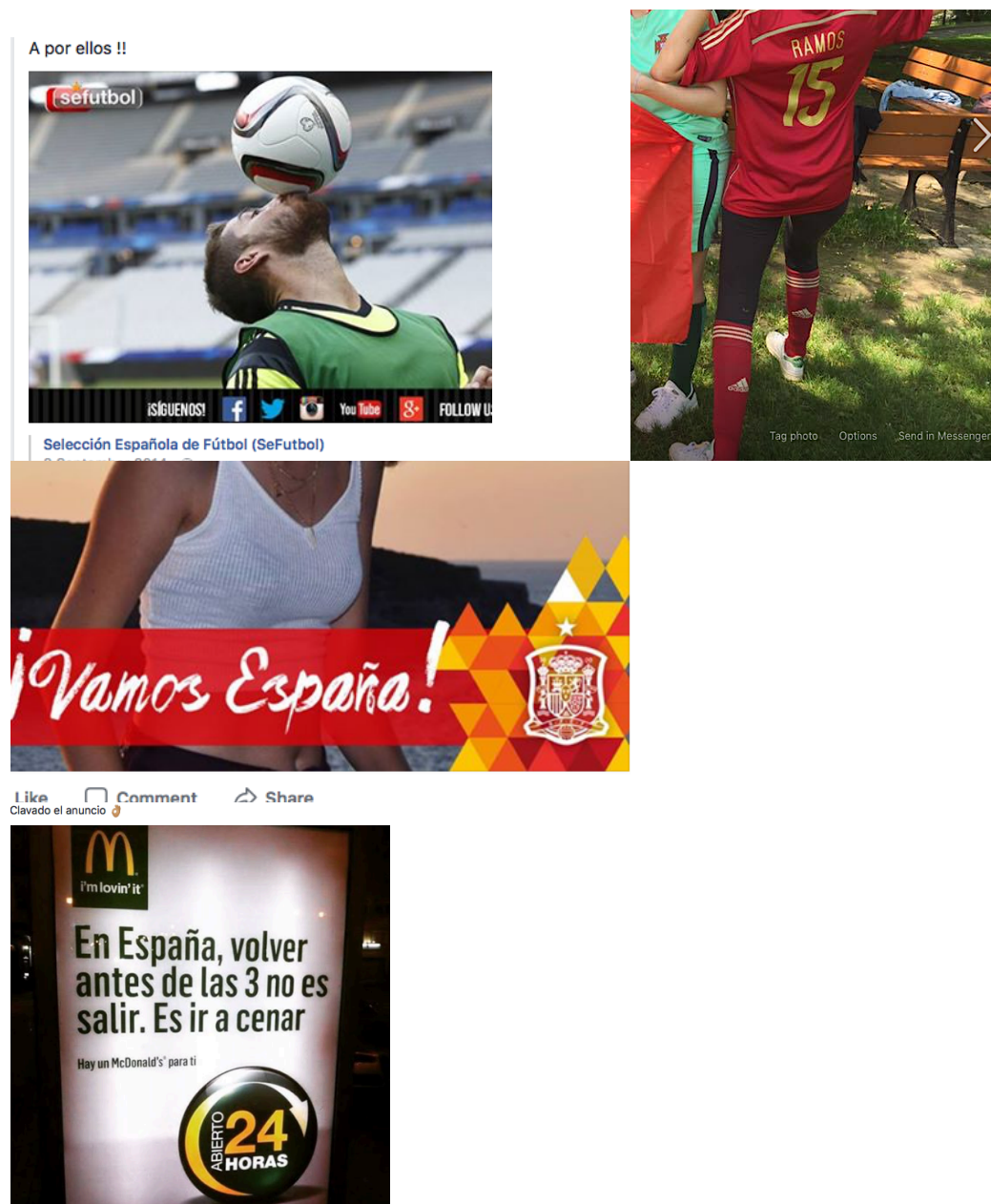
Peer groups based on national identity

Language choice in multiliteracy practices is another way to position in the community and built identity. Ana (18) shows belonging to the community of the Spanish speaking culture. She does it through her multiliteracy choices: posting Latino music (reggaeton videos), posts written in Spanish, and photos about Spanish football teams (Figures 4.11 and 4.12). This identifies her not only as a Spanish speaker, but also as a member of a larger community of peers that expands to other Spanish speaking countries that share the same culture and values. What is more, the uses of French and English also construct her multiple identity by engaging in transborder and multilingual literacies beyond bounded national identities (Lam, 2009; McGinnis et al., 2007; Stewart, 2014). SNSs become platforms that represent a kind of culture ambassador for young people to share who they already are, and who they want to be in their social environment.

Figure 4.11: Ana's Latino music video



Figure 4.12: Showing Spanish culture affiliation



(In Spain getting home before 3a.m., is not going out, it's just going out for dinner, (my translation))

Findings in this study concur with research (McGinnis et al. 2007; Stewart, 2014; Domingo, 2012) that found that language choice on internet sites helps to reflect identification with a particular social network and are a way to

maintain affiliation to the person's cultural heritage. Multiliteracy associated to a specific language also works as a mark of identity for minorities, or a way of keeping in contact with friends and family in transnational contexts. However, in the present study, language did not stand out as a particular tool to express identity construction by showing belonging to a minority group. It looked more as an example of 'showing off' national proudness, informing others of the capabilities to share the Latino or French culture affiliation, and a way to keep in contact with extended family members. Both participants are fluent in 3 languages (Spanish, English and French) and hold two nationalities (French and Spanish), but there is a predominance of English for communication purposes in their digital multiliteracy practices with the exception of communications with family members as I have already discussed. For Ana (18) the reason is practical, she considers English as a lingua franca:

'Everybody understands English, and that way you can talk to everybody, it is more natural...on the internet everything is in English, films, music, it is easier'

(Ana, 18)

For Marie (16) it is more a question of personal choice and shared practices:

'It depends on the person, your mood, if it is easier to use the word in French or Spanish and the person understands it, then I use it, I also mix if they understand everything'

(Marie, 16)

According to Lewis & Fabos (2005, p.482), 'language is sometimes used strategically to initiate and sustain satisfying communication exchanges'. Spanish is not Ana's preferred language to position herself ideologically in

society mainly because she identifies Spanish with the language of her hobbies, interests and family network. French and English seem to be the preferred options:

'I prefer to express things in English, or in the case of 'Je suis Charlie' or the terrorist attacks in Paris, in French because I was very touched and I felt very French'

(Ana, 18)

As discussed in the literature, identity is sometimes considered as synonymous with ideology. However, identity is not merely ideology; rather ideology leads to identity (McAdams, 1985). In the case of Ana, some of her ideological positions and choices to post contribute to define her identity by the engagement she shows with a particular cause. Ana's multiliteracy texts in these SNSs to position herself are first and foremost about establishing social connection and presence with others than may think alike and also to state her way of thinking for the ones who may not share her views. These multiliteracy practices are not necessarily about communicating content, and they are associated with performing identity through ideology (Alvermann & Heron, 2001). These are not messages meant to convey meaning as much as to inhabit a shared social space. Even something as simple as a comment on YouTube becomes an act of media making because it is taking place in a public and persistent online space.

Figure 4.13: Ana's (18) ideological positioning



Soutien aux familles atteintes par les actes de ces fils de pute ! #jesuischarlie

Examples of translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) or using different languages in the same phrase do occur, the data shows code switching for both participants in exchanges with peers that share the same codes which is consistent with the literature (Lewis & Fabos, 2005).

'Happy belated bday pic ❤️❤️ miss u lots pero bueno de todas maneras te veo pronto, dentro de poco ... '

(Ana, 18)

'te quieroooo. T'es une fille formidable que j'aime énormément vraiment ❤️'

(Marie, 16)

Figure 4.14: Example of Maria's code switching with friend (Spanish, French, and English)

Maria Bebu, te voy a escribir en español, te quiero mucho de verdad, y aunque también te conozca desde poco pues cuentas muchísimo para mi, eras mi lauritachinitaa ❤️ I'll continue in french, bref et je passe chaque jour avec toi, littéralement, je suis avec toi tout le temps et franchement je suis grave contente que se soit toi parceque you are BAE. Hahaha tu m'influence trop, bref voila you know everything and tqqq os tia

Thanks bebu
See translation

Like · Reply ·
1 · 23 January 2016 at 19:23

Remove

Marie Thanks so much for the surprise and for the cupcake and everything you did

Like · Reply · 23 January 2016 at 13:48

Remove

Marie Tia eres laaaaa mejorr

Like · Reply · 23 January 2016 at 13:48

In conclusion, languages are chosen specifically by both participants in answer to common interests with peers that share the same codes, to show cultural diversity, position ideologically or bond with family members. Language choice does not seem as a problematic aspect in multiliteracy practices. It does play a role in Ana's (18) identity construction and multiliteracy practices as she consciously chooses among languages to give away her personal political and ideological positions. Warschauer (2002, p.65) remarks that 'consciously or unconsciously people express dual identities by the linguistic choices they make even within a single sentence'. In this study participants construct their identities by more than the languages they use, and this relates to learning, the construction of identity is an on-going process of learning on how we make the convenient multimodal choices for our own understanding on how to convey the meanings we wish. Language is a mark of communication make easier with family members and friends for Marie (16), and a way of showing friendship, family ties, and cultural belonging and ideological positioning for Ana (18). This feeling of usage tolerance and language exchange may be explained by

the status of the three languages used; which are all spoken widely and considered to be prestigious, and to the fact that the participants do not seem to be attached in a powerful way to one particular culture:

'I am a mix, I am half Spanish, half French but sometimes I think like an American...whatever'

(Marie, 16)

'I feel more Spanish than French, I like more the way of life in Spain but I use English because everybody does, my Spanish and French friends'

(Ana, 18)

Multiliteracies is about interests in communicating and meaning making, with the different choices to convey meaning in a variety of modes. The participants in this study make decisions about how and what to reveal, or not, language usage, what to alter, and where to click 'like' when they give opinions. They care about the image they project online and how it fits in peer groups and wider audiences. These practices contribute towards the participants' identity construction, respectively as a fashion model and it-girl (Marie16); and as a skater, surfer and football lover (Ana, 18). In consequence, their peer groups are orientated towards these interests and define also some of their interest-driven practices.

'Well, I also spend time watching trends, music and videos that are going viral. I guess that keeping track with the world helps me to fit in and so not to feel left out when everyone else is talking about something they say or see on FB for example'

(Ana, 18)

Being aware of what is going on in the media becomes a core part of that interest in communication and fosters multiliteracy practices and identity construction. It is a way of existing through expression in multimodal ways as Davis (2010) states:

‘You have to go on (Facebook) otherwise it’s like you don’t exist.
If you are not there then where are you?’

(Davis, 2010, p. 79)

In the present moment, teenagers have the impression that what they have to say has a value in itself. Teenagers become the digital experts against whom we cannot compete or keep pace: their speed texting, their understanding of how social networks function or the mastery of technical issues online they possess turns them into skilled users. They are also given voice to express what they think, do, or feel, they are empowered in comparison with adults’ voices that have been traditionally more culturally and socially valued. These same teenagers have at present the possibility of broadcasting to a wider public audience and receiving feedback from peers, family and friends. What they express on line and the way in which they choose to do it is not understood by them as ‘identity experimentation’. They do not perceive it as experimentation at all because this term carries along the connotation of something that is not real. The choices they make are clear in their minds, the expression of them follows patterns that are decided beforehand, and of course for them are completely authentic:

'This is not cool, so I do not post it'

(Marie, 16)

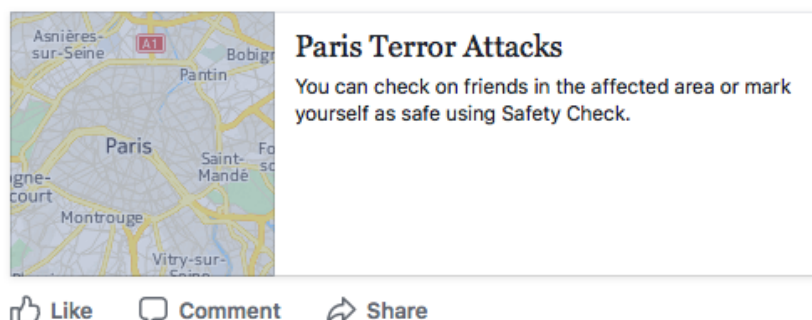
'Experimenting? I do not experiment, this is my life'

(Ana, 18)

Ana (18) uses social media, as I mentioned before, to position herself ideologically and socially, she posts videos, photos and writes about her beliefs, about her opinions on what is going on in the world around her. For instance, positioning herself in regard to the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015 or giving her opinion about what she supports or not on the news.

This positioning contributes to her identity construction, on the one hand as a Spanish citizen, and on the other, as an active member of a multicultural globalised society, she uses multiliteracy to express it and make the networked community know. As Maira (2004, p.227) points out, 'many youth express through their online multiliteracies their responses to local, national and global issues and positionings'.

Figure 4.15: FB alert on Paris terrorist attacks in 2015 and Christmas campaign in Liberia





Another fundamental aspect of identity construction is how teenagers come to grips with the changes they go through socially and also physically. Ana (18) uses social media as well for identity construction as a way to come to terms with her body's physical changes, and the fact of self-acknowledging this in an open space among her peers helps her to deal with these changes, and with issues related to how she perceives them and ultimately values herself. The body is represented in the digital world in this study through words and images within the social practices of the participants. In online spaces the body together with, gender, age, personality, social positioning, likes, etc., is a marker of identity, it is, as indicated in the literature in Chapter Two, a way of 'authoring the self' (Thomas, 2007, p. 9) and the multiliteracy expression of the aspects of self that have been chosen to be shared with the networked publics.

Figures 4.16: Ana's (18) comment on her body and humour on her FB page

I just realized how long my arm is...



Marie (16), on the other hand, does not feel the need to position herself in the community, which makes me wonder if this may be due to the developmental stage in which she is compared to her elder sister (already at university), which will correlate with the maturity attached to the different stages in teenagers' identity described in the psychological view of identity in the literature review.

In the case of Marie (16) the group of closer friends seem to be the most influential factor in fostering her multiliteracy social media practices, followed by a predominance of peer groups interested in fashion, mainly in Instagram, and school peers for academic related matters. Sometimes peer groups in social media sites put pressure on teenagers as they demand from them to seriously balance issues regarding what to post or not, and how these will influence their way of presenting who they are and their identity construction. This sense of obligation is sometimes accepted as it contributes to self-examination, but other times it is perceived more like a burden as it was the case for Marie in this study who spent several months without posting:

'I am just not posting anymore, at least not for a while. My last photos were so good that everybody, all my members were waiting for me to post and they were sending messages in order to find out when'

Me: And?

'You don't get it! I do not want to disappoint them, I have to be very sure of everything I post, and it has to be top notch'

(Marie, 16)

These comments show, that for Marie (16), expressing herself is an act of self-reflexion, and that her choices about multimodal literacies are implemented consciously and carefully. They accomplish identity construction through friendship and associations with groups of people that allow them to keep and maintain friendship connections. They use social media to stay in touch with friends, family and to feel more connected; also to get quick answers from peers for school related queries. They are selective regarding their ways

of communication and their main goal seems to be social interaction rather than transmitting information. Literacy practices are context and purpose specific and connected to the communities in which they are used, they develop from pre-existing relationships and not the opposite. Multiliteracy practices are understood as social in this study, which means that identity construction is mediated by the digital multimodal artifacts teenagers produce. For instance, the use of images or lack of them in Ana and Marie's Facebook pages related to issues of self-representation and identity. Multiliteracies in this study show the choices that two teenagers make in order to figure out who they are and in order to project the wanted image of themselves, because identity is not only related to the individual, but also to the social environment in which it is constructed.

'I do not usually spend a lot of time on social media but when I do it is either to catch on or see what is going on with my family and friends'

(Ana, 18)

'...it helps me to get in touch with other friends as well as new ones in any part of the world'

'Ay! déjame en paz! I can do two things at the same time. I have to check if there is something going on, maybe one of the teachers is not coming ...'

(Marie, 16)

In summary, the two teenagers in this study use multimodal, multilingual and multiliteracy practices to develop friendships, to relate to groups of peers

either based on interests or other, and to position and express their identities ideologically and culturally.

4.1.2 Interest-driven Practices

Interest-driven practices are categorised in Ito et al.'s (2010) framework of analysis as those in which teenagers mess around or geek out in digital environments.

- Messing around
- Geeking out

Messing around

Messing around practices are not bound to maintaining social connections like in hanging out practices. They represent a more intense media engagement, for instance looking around, searching for information online and experimenting with media and gaming. These practices are mostly self-directed and based on exploration. Ito et al.'s (2008) describe them as being interest orientated, experimental and playful in nature.

Marie's (16) publishing about her areas of interest is carried out mainly through Instagram. It shows groups that share the kind of activities she is interested in like, fashion, parties, travelling, and sentimental relationships ('coupes' as she calls it).

One of her main 'experimental' activities is to mess around with photos to be able to edit them for her Instagram account. For that, she pays a lot of attention to other models' Instagram accounts and the way in which they are designed and puts a lot of time and effort in organising and creating hers because according to her, the quality of the photos in Instagram is more important than in other social networks that rely more in other multimodal literacies.

'The better your photos look, the more successful you are'

(Marie,16)

For Marie to follow someone on Instagram they do not only have to be keen on her same fields of interest, but they also have to show the right kinds of images that appeal to her. This is done, for example, by the multimodal way in which their sites are organised: the lay out, the colours, the choice and quality of the photos posted, the videos, and the themes. Domingo, Jewitt, & Kress, (2015) emphasize how linearity is replaced by modularity on the screen in digital environments and how this expresses social meanings and promotes choice guided by the interest of the person who engages with the multimodal text. This is the case in this study where Marie's choices of Instagram sites are based on her preferences of design.

According to Marie (16) Instagram projects a 'totally controlled image of what you want people to get from you, but also a more authentic one'. This helps to her identity construction by the multiliteracy choices she makes on her own account in the sense that image is in fact an element of the design of multimodal texts. This study suggests, whether in friendship-driven or

interest-driven genres of participation, that the choice of SNSs, modality and purposes are associated with specific communication expectations and goals and they are also predetermined by the users. For example, when Marie (16) is showing me and commenting on her Instagram account she is quite clear about what drives her to decide on the choices she makes and the meaning of her practices. She uses the expression 'bref ma vie, voila' (in short, my life, and that's it) to position herself and her practices as meaningful and real and on the importance of the choices she makes regarding her image and what she wants to convey through it about her identity:

'See, it is a description of what I like, my interests and myself but it shows the mind-set of how a person is and what she/he likes also. In Instagram I pay attention to details such as coherence in the photos, colours, if it seems tidy and I use those I follow to motivate myself, who I want to become, but it is mainly visual. I can keep photos from people I like and their photos, dresses...instagram suggests me people I may like to follow according to what I like but I can decide on my own, see 'fewer posts' like this and if I click I redefine what I want. In snap chap, I can send photos, write, I can create a video with souvenirs, people or places that will be save for ever or not, and that way I have my memories of everything I do, everybody I see, the places I go, 'bref ma vie, voila'.

'Mum, I do not give importance to what I do; it is that way I live and that's it. We do not think hard'

'What I post about me is real, but in a polished, exaggerated way, I mean the good things. This is real important for the image people you do not know personally get of you. With friends you know you share and cry on their shoulders when you are not OK by skipping, writing, posting and sharing music, photos in which you do not look that nice...But the others, you do not those people to know, you want to look cool always'

(Marie, 16)

Teenagers create content by sharing practices. This forms an increasingly integral part of their communicative exchanges and plays a significant role in their sense of identity and community. Creative content production and

exchange empowers teenagers in different ways. First in their multiliteracies development and technical skills, it also fosters self-worth and self-expression (Notley & Tacchi, 2005); it encourages different aspects of their identity construction (Coleman & Rowe, 2005), and finally, values ethnicity and cultural background (Blanchard et al., 2008). Instagram is a niche social network that allows connecting with fewer people who have the same interests, hobbies or professional associations that is why the sense of 'community' builds more clearly than in other SNSs.

'I engage more in Instagram, there is a community and I feel part of it like nowhere else'

'Instagram is where I follow the people and things I like. Snapchat or WhatsApp is for communicating with friends, and FB to keep up with family and friends'

(Marie, 16)

Figure 4.17: Example of Marie's (16) Messages on her Instagram



This feeling of community, and engagement is extended to the professional arena and it adds to Marie's identity as it functions as her modelling 'business card'.

'When I want clients to see what I have done I send them my Instagram'

(Marie, 16)

Figure 4.18: *Example of Instagram account that Marie (16) likes:*

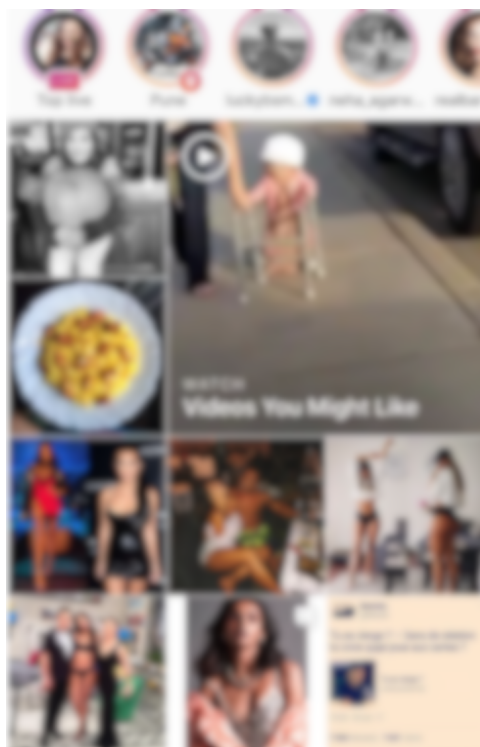
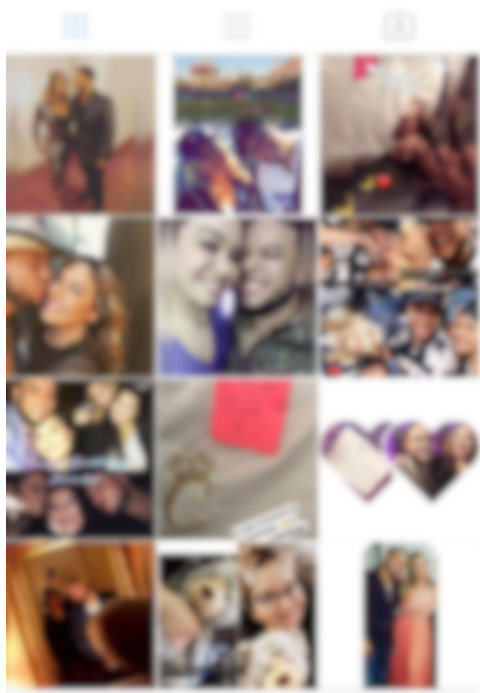


Figure 4.19: *Example of Instagram account that Marie (16) does not like:*

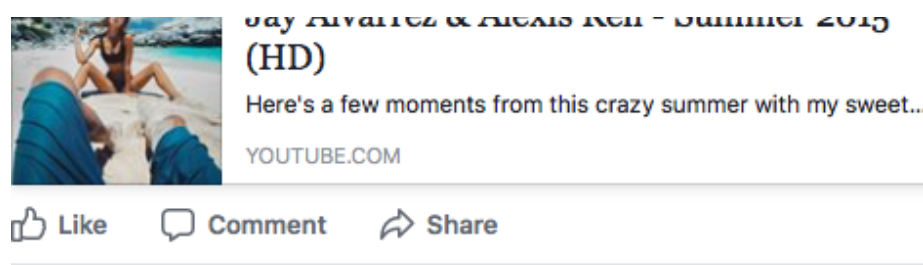


Marie (16) invests in messing around activities that help her explore new interests and motivations, and to connect with others outside local friendships. For instance, 'the couples theme'. This is something that Marie (16) does 'to relax' as she describes it. She follows famous young couples on YouTube or Instagram that she considers as a role model of what a couple in modern times should be: famous, beautiful and who seem to have no other occupation than to travel the world, do 'cool things', and have a great time:

'I love just watching the videos to relax after school, it is like watching a film, but that's it. Well I also wanna do the same and I get ideas for my photos'

(Marie 16)

Figure 4.20: Example of Marie's 'couples' theme on YouTube



Geeking out

Geeking out activities are based on a passion and take strong commitment in time and effort, something that not all teenagers want to compromise. The data in this study shows that the geeking activities in which the participants engage the most are as well those driven by a passion or those in which they need to rewrite and challenge rules.

Marie (16) does not go farther than the messing around in interest-driven practices. She admits that she does not have the time or the commitment to engage further, and according to the literature this is the case also for other teenagers as fewer of them in general develop a geeking out interest (Ito et al., 2010).

'I am just not into something that much, to spend amounts of time on the net'

(Marie, 16)

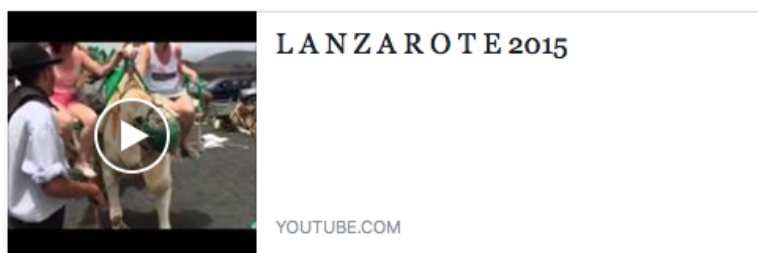
In Ana's (18) case, creating videos, whether for friends' birthdays or family holidays, adding music to them, and streaming for new films have been the main interest driven activities she engages in. She is the family expert on those interests and feels very proud whenever we appeal to her skills. These activities are for her a way of '*geeking out*' and they express her strong commitment to a certain technology or genre that carries consistent and sophisticated interaction, in a more systematic, long-term and purposeful way than '*messing around*'. It also challenges restrictions and forwards innovation and problem solving skills, for example trying to get recent films that are not yet on the internet from dubious sites and finding solutions for eventual technical or restriction problems. She uses mainly YouTube to post her own videos and has a community of viewers and fellow experts that do not belong to her usual friendship or peers' networks. Ito et al., (2010) see these practices as real examples of peer-driven learning. For Ana geeking out contributes to her identity construction as she feels proud to be considered an expert. Her father usually reaches at her when he cannot manage to find a

decent version of a recent film to watch on the net or when he wants her to produce videos after family holidays.

Figure 4.21: *Family holidays summer 2015*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6QZw6/svCE&feature=youtu.be>

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👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

In conclusion, genres of participation whether friendship driven, or interest driven foster a variety of multimodal multiliteracy practices and contribute to identity construction. They encourage contacts online, which are in many cases an extension of contacts already existent offline; but not necessarily like in the case of 'geeking out' where practices expand to people who are not part of the closer circle of friends or peers. These interest-driven practices are therefore highly social and engaged, and serve as a window shop for some of the specific shared values in teenagers. They take place in multiple contexts through multiple literacies and shift to and from groups of peers to individual friendships or to interest driven activities. They are based on media content, such as pictures, movies, and music and they are not considered as happening in a different sphere by teenagers, but as part of the real world in which they exist.

4.1.3 Summary of Genres of Participation and Study Research Questions

While this study set out to explore digital media use for multiliteracy practices and identity construction in two teenagers in out-of-school environments and its potential links with in-school practices, what it found was an strong inherent relational nature of their multiliteracy practices with identity issues and multimodality, in a way that the three of them were intertwined in order to allow teenagers to communicate effectively and build identity. This section returns to the research questions in an effort to summarise findings in relation to the existing literature.

1. How do participants use digital media for literacy practices?

This study found that genres of participation whether friendship-driven or interest-driven foster multiliteracy practices in a multimodal way. Digital media encourages communication with friends in informal settings and in more engaged practices that deal with learning from peers or in more autonomous ways. It helps teenagers to speak their minds, to position themselves socially and contributes to connect learning among communities of practice. Teenagers pay attention to the way they communicate, the modes they choose for that, what they post, write, record, and are aware of an audience that responds to what they express requiring from them to carefully pay attention to their multiple literacy forms. Much of the literature relating to multiliteracies and multimodality discussed in Chapter Two indicated that these practices respond to teenagers' interests and opportunities to communicate in a meaningful way in a specific social context. This influences

their modes, languages and SNSs choices (Boyd, 2010; Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010; Gee, 2006; Thomas, 2007; Witte, 2007).

2. How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multiple kinds of digitalised texts?

This study shows that in the process of becoming literate teenagers are making sense of the world, they position themselves socially, culturally, linguistically and ideologically (Alvermann, 2002; Kress & Jewitt, 2003; Marsh, 2006).

They make public an ideal version of themselves (Manago, Graham, Greenfield & Salimkhan, 2008) in the aim to become that person (Miller & Arnold, 2003), but they do not experiment with different identities understood as separate entities, they make choices related to histories, culture, and social relations (Gee, 1990; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; McCarthy & Moje, 2002). The study did not find that the participants showed multiple identities or that a real disconnect existed between the offline and online identities as some of the literature suggested (Luk & Lin, 2007). The literature speaks of tensions between the real world and the digital world (Black, 2010) but there is no proof in this study of that divide in the participants' digital practices. Genres of participation could be used in formal academic environments in a practical way and although much of the literature discussed in Chapter Two indicated that scholars recognise the potential of these multiliteracy practices in formal education (Crook, 2012; Cummins et al., 2005a; Cope & Kalantzis, 2010; Kamler & Comber, 2005; Lewis & Fabos, 2005; NLG, 1996; Sefton-Green, 2004), the participants in this

study do not perceive them as really valuable for school even though they would like to see these practices incorporated in school environments.

3. How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?

Participants in this study see some of their digital practices situated exclusively in out-of-school environments and associated with their free time. Furthermore, they seem unwilling to take these informal learning practices into more academic settings. There is no evidence in the data collected that teachers and establishments were perceived by the participants as active driving forces to implement in-school what teenagers already do in out-of-school settings. Neither was there a need of discussion or a sense of loss about these matters coming from participants. There was more a lack of awareness and understanding of multiliteracies for more than friendship or interest-driven genres of participation from the point of view of participants. They did not seem to consider these out-of-school practices as part of their academic ones at present.

4.2. Networked publics

Networked publics represent two sides of the same coin: they can be considered as a potential danger by teenagers, schools, and parents, etc., and at the same time as valuable audiences for teenagers multiliteracy

practices and identity construction. In the following section I discuss both implications for multiliteracies and identity construction:

- Perceived as audience to express themselves/feedback
- Perceived as a danger

Perceived as audience to express themselves/feedback

Ito et al. (2010, p.2) describe Networked Publics as ‘a linked set of social, cultural, and technological developments that have accompanied the growing engagement with digital networked media’. It is where teenagers go to see and to be seen. This means that networked publics are simultaneously spaces and audiences bound together thorough technological networks (Boyd, 2010). They are the imagined community that emerges as a result of the intersection of people, technology, and practice. These networked publics are an important aspect of multiliteracy and identity construction in that they serve many of the same functions that we can find in other types of publics; they allow teenagers to come together and to connect with people beyond closer friends or family members. In contrast, they introduce distinct affordances that change the nature of interactions. I have discussed for example in Marie’s (16) use of Instagram, that networked publics shape her identity and the ways in which she practices multiliteracy (Boyd, 2010). The notion of ‘publics’ in this study shares Livingstone (2005) understanding of the term in that the term ‘public’ is a synonymous with ‘audience’. This audience is by no means a passive one, teenagers are not in front of their computers just to

swallow everything they get from media, they are active actors and reactors as Ito et al.'s (2010, p.3) states: 'publics can be reactors, (re)makers and (re)distributors, engaging in shared culture and knowledge through discourse and social exchange as well as through acts of media reception'.

SNSs combine features that allow individuals to present themselves through a public profile, articulate a list of users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

In the SNSs used by the participants in this study data confirmed common features to other digital communication spaces that play an important role in constructing SNSs as networked publics, namely, profiles, friends' lists, tools for public commenting on posts, and stream-based updates.

Profiles allow the participants to 'write themselves into being in a digital environment' (Boyd, 2010, p.43). For instance, Ana's (18) engagement on Facebook with networked publics through the way in which she crafts her profile page and how Marie (16), in contrast, sets limits concerning who she wants to interact with. These choices also serve as a way of engaging or disengaging with a particular site. Participants in this study also define their publics by articulating whom they wish to connect with and who wishes to connect with them. Boyd (2010, p.5) implies that teenagers include 'all those who they consider a part of their social world and to whom they are directing their communication practices' this explains, in the case of the participants in this study, and in most teenagers' FB accounts, the high number of friends they display.

What are the communication tools they employ that may have a direct impact on their multiliteracy productions?

At first sight we can argue that teenagers' multiliteracy productions are not very sophisticated and lack interesting content. In this study data show that the participants engaged in communication mainly to connect socially before a broader audience, and then to create content by sharing practices. As networked publics blur as well the boundaries between public and private interactions, teenagers are offered opportunities to participate in 'a public', which does not mean they want everything they do to be 'public'. To make something public teenagers have to make decisions on what are willing to share or not. This guides also what participants in this study make public:

*'We could think of Social Media as a way to make life easier for us (...)
Whenever I want people to know that I have been somewhere, whenever I want to show my life style, the things I like, the people I hang out with, my environment, my family, future plans... I will expose it on social media because I want people to know. To be seen by others as valuable and important, but I do not share all the stuff'*

(Ana, 18)

'I post photos, I comment, I share and send memes, for example I publish things about modelling, what I eat to keep healthy, how I exercise to be fitted, the places I go like parties, clothes I buy, modelling stuff, that tells me what to make public'

(Marie, 16)

Networked publics influence also the kind of SNSs used and the nature of the messages they want to transmit:

'With Snapchat and WhatsApp it is very easy to create a group of friends and send photos, videos or messages to the group as a whole. When I want to post a photo and I want people to

remember that photo then I use Instagram; if I want to publish a photo but I do not want people to remember that photo then I use Snapchat'

(Marie, 16)

I use FB the most to post photos and comment and share, then Insta for the same as FB and to find out what other people do, get ideas from other accounts, decoration travelling, places to eat, 'bref' an interest, and WhatsApp to communicate and Snapchat the least. Different people like to see different things and are more into FB, or Insta so I take that into account because I do the same'

(Ana, 18)

Marie's (16) comments confirm what Livingstone's (2009) states, and corroborate that the applications teenagers use are chosen in regard to the literacy needs they experience:

'Young people evaluate the available forms of communication according to their distinct communication needs, making careful choices among face to face, writing, email, instant message, chat rooms, telephone, social networking, text messaging and so forth'

(Livingstone, 2009, p. 98)

What they do online is not exclusively self-oriented to keep friendships going or delve into a field of interest. The others play a role in the messages they try to convey, and, in that way, they want those messages to be broadcasted. Teens are aware that a potential audience will see what they produce online and will reflect on it. Both teenagers in this study employed ways to control publics, for instance by granting access to meaning through multiple literacies. For example, some of the messages they post will be understood only by a particular public and not necessarily by the whole networked publics. If any of my daughters publishes a song, I will probably

understand it in a different way than her friends and peers, as I will not be aware of the connotations or implicitness of that song; maybe I will believe that she just likes that kind of music, instead of paying attention to the lyrics, the band, the reasons for choosing that specific song for the specific message she wants to convey , etc. This is something that her peers, unlike me, will immediately grasp.

Networked publics are a constant presence in Marie's (16) publishing choices and she spends quite a lot of time editing her photos for her Instagram account. The line between a successful photograph and one that is not worth publishing is expressed in the number and quality of comments received, that is to say feedback from publics. Networked publics for her are something to which she gives a lot of importance and reflexion. For example, it is frequent that during family holidays endless sessions of photos take place. The total number of photos taken can be of around 45 to put a number, but from those 45 only 1 or 2 will fulfil the required characteristics to be selected and posted on her Instagram account. The number of comments for a good photo in just a few hours can be very high, with some of the comments related to professional interests and possible outcomes for her modelling career. In Instagram, you have a number of followers based on friendship but also, and sometimes primarily based on their interest in what is posted. There are people you may know or not depending on what you have decided to select as publics. Instagram is also a very visual SNSs and the lay out of the page, the quality of photos and the general display are therefore very important in order to seek networked publics validation.

Ana (18), similarly to her sister, is totally aware of the extent of social media on publics, and as I have commented on how this influences her identity construction in friendship driven practices, she purposefully uses it to position ideologically. A concrete example is her participation in the 'Ice bucket challenge' campaign. In this campaign, a bucket of cold water had to be thrown over a person's head, either by another person or self-administered in order to raise awareness and raise funds for motor neurone disease. The nominated participants (usually by friends or peers) had to be filmed and then he/she nominates others to do the same and donate. This fashion went viral and in a few days everybody, not only the famous, were participating and making it public on their social media sites. The awareness and donations increased a lot, but studies show that the majority of participants did not actually donate (Steel, 2014, Townsend, 2014). My point is that the influence of this initiative in networked publics was so high that everybody was doing it and many other challenges have been created since like the *Rice Bucket Challenge* in India, or the *Milk Bucket Challenge* by English farmers. Leaving aside its impact and criticisms, the 'Ice bucket challenge' would have been impossible without considering the dynamics and influence of networked publics in media users.

Perceived as a danger

When I refer in this study to networked publics as a possible danger I am not engaging in a discussion related to criminal behaviours, but rather to

the dangers that participants perceive in audiences and that were present in the data collected. These were mainly around issues of disclosure and privacy and issues dealing with the feedback they could get from audiences and the consequences on identity. Participants chose SNSs in regards of privacy matters. In some of the SNSs, for example Facebook, everybody sees what you post, friends but also friends of friends and strangers if privacy settings are set to share with everyone. Participants in this study were keener on WhatsApp as they considered it as a more restricted media option to keep privacy. However, Snapchat, which changes the rules of persistence of texts by according a number of seconds to each message or photo before self-deleting, was not very popular at the moment of data collection, and both participants considered it mostly as a playful but not very mature option to communicate. They recognised and valued that Snapchat offers privacy settings to share their story to either only their friends or everyone but in line with other studies, for instance Baron's (2005) study on IM, this belief highlights the fact that as teenagers grow up, they communicate differently mirroring usages that correspond to more conventional and grown-up models:

'I don't really use it much, it was fun when it came out, you didn't have to worry that much of making mistakes because you knew it will delete, but after a year people got tired, it is not on fashion anymore'

(Ana, 18)

'I used it a lot when I was younger like 13 or so, but now it is a bit baby stuff'

(Marie, 16)

Participants in this study were aware of a broader public audience that comprises not only the people they may know offline or their peer groups, but also strange social publics that may have access to their social media platforms and that are totally unknown for them. These networked publics may be seen as having a positive effect, someone to read them, see what they publish and provide feedback as I have discussed, but also as a potential danger, to criticize, bully or influence what they do in different ways.

In any case, the data collected from this study shows that both participants are conscious of those broader publics that are permanently connected.

This affects their identity and multiliteracy practices in different ways:

- by behaving as a way of censorship to their own identities
- by influencing their multiliteracy choices
- by taking into account that everything they publish does not go into a vacuum space.
- by shaping their multimodal choices and ways of expression and being

Data in this study did not particularly highlighted that participants engaged in dangerous behaviours online or suffered from inappropriate behaviours from others. The risk came from outside publics and it impacted in their literacies:

Me: What are you doing? (...) Why is it taking so long?

'I am texting, (...) I am very careful with what I write, I do not want to look stupid, post something with mistakes or that doesn't make any sense...'

(Ana, 18)

Both participants acknowledge that audience sometimes is behind some of the decisions they make to publish or not.

'Sometimes I am going to post something or share a photo but then I think about who is going to see it and then I change my mind'

(Ana, 18)

'I always think about the consequences, I don't want to mess things up'

(Marie, 16)

Participants used some strategies in order to discourage unwanted audiences such as: limiting and trafficking personal information and therefore making searching more difficult for others (Marie on her FB profile with no photos and change of her last name) and establishing specific groups of audiences for private communication needs. Different language choices in their multiliteracy productions and the development of new genres of written communication such as composed casualness in online messages were also retrieved by the data and helped participants to restrict networked publics. In geeked out interest-driven groups Ana (18) engaged and developed new experimental genres that make use of the authoring and editing capabilities of digital media, for example personal and amateur media broadcasted online such as photos, video producing, mashups, and remixes.

4.2.1 Summary of Networked Publics and Study Research Questions

1. How do participants use digital media for literacy practices?

Multiliteracy texts are about multimodal communication and social and cultural practices in context that change accordingly to one's personal circumstances. This relates to the literature in that meanings seem to be grounded in the participants' real-world patterns of experience, action and subjective interests (Gee, 2006, 2008). Digital practices and SNSs provide the opportunities for social interaction that extends further than the usual circles of friends and peers (Boyd, 2008), and develop literacies by participating among other possibilities in social networks (Witte, 2007). On the interest-driven side, teenagers turn to networked publics 'to connect with like-minded peers who share knowledge and expertise that may not be available to them locally' (Ito, 2008, p.36). On the friendship-driven side, youth see online spaces and communications media as places to hang out with their friends and engage in private communication exchanges that are not monitored by parents and teachers.

2. How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multiple kinds of digitalised texts?

Networked Publics have an influence in identity construction in that they shape what teenagers are willing to disclose on SNSs. Participants believed that what they do makes them what they are. Both teenagers in this study care about privacy issues linked to identity, which concurs with the literature (Boyd & Hargittai, 2010; Hoofnagle et al., 2010), but their search of privacy

and identity crashes with networked publics and requires from them agency to manage boundaries on what to publish or not, which sometimes seems problematic and not clearly defined for them.

In the literature Halliday (1978) defines 'meaning as choice', and this leads to identity because with the choices we make we position ourselves in relation to someone or something. When we interact in communication, social groups are delimited, and the individual identified, the expression of his/her comments, attitudes, and evaluations, and the relationships settled with the audience define who he/she wants to be. Networked publics allow the participants to build themselves as an integral part of the community (Goode, 2010) and communicating with peers and friends turns to be very important because it influences how they see themselves (Larson & Richards, 1991; Ito et al., 2008, 2010; Brown et al., 1994).

3. How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?

One of the aspects according to Boyd (2008, 2010) that shows great influence in learners' productions that go public at school are networked publics. At school everybody knows each other and the pressure of being seen and read in a way that may reflect a different person from the one teenagers display at school can be problematic. On the other hand, other researchers (Brown, 2017; Buckingham, 2008) urge about the need to incorporate young people's social learning into formal learning.

The participants in this study were very clear about the possible drawbacks of incorporating friendship driven practices into school settings and were not very enthusiastic about it. These practices were considered too private, and there was no intention to share them with an audience that they have not chosen freely, even if this audience includes some of their peers and friends. In the case of interest driven practices in relation to networked publics, the participants' impression was positive, and they were willing to see more geeking or messing around activities for academic matters, they were also willing to learn more about how to position themselves in regard to finding and reusing resources in their multimodal texts for school.

4.3 Peer-based and self-directed learning online

Peer-based learning online motivates teenagers to develop their multiliteracies and identities through the reputation they build within a community of experts. In the data from this study, it is characterised by:

- valuing informal learning from peers
- collaborative and mentored learning by peers

Valuing informal learning from peers

Peer-based learning is the one that is not defined by institutions, but 'emerges from kids' interests and everyday social communication' (Ito et al., 2008, p. 38). In this study it essentially refers to teenagers learning with and from each other on the internet in out-of-school settings. Practices in out-of-

school environments show that there is a strong feeling of great importance given to peer-based learning among teenagers. They share what they know with others, while picking up learning from them, they work in a collaborative way, receiving and giving feedback. This kind of learning proves its value in friendship and interest-driven practices as well, when they want to know more about a particular field or have the motivation to master or become better at a certain skill. Peer learning is considered prestigious because teenagers respect each other's authority online erasing the traditional markers of status and authority that exist in more formal settings and because is embedded in a context of reciprocity. Their authority comes from hands on experience and expertise, what can be seen beforehand online. Teenagers also spend time on their own learning in a self-directed way from tutorials on YouTube or by observing what other users do. They create and navigate different forms of expression by exploring new interests in 'messaging around' or 'geeking out' and acquire in that way varied forms of technical and media literacy. The learning that happens relies on trial and error, and it is later shared through their creations to receive feedback from networked publics online. Ana (18) engages in video production and gets all the information she needs from YouTube, blogs or geeking communities. She finds sites also to download new films and she is very critical about quality of image so not all the streaming sites work for her. She has taught her father how to do it as well.

'I know how to do it because I am interested, I am not going to pay for it, I mean, being a student... I have learnt on my own by trying and trying, a couple of times I have asked online'

(Ana, 18)

Peer-based learning values the social networks that youth have and maintain. These networks are mediated and reinforced through SNSs. If there is pedagogical value to encouraging peers to have strong social networks, then there is pedagogical value in supporting their sociable practices on SNSs (Brennan, 2003; Notley, 2008). This value is about the kinds of informal social learning that is required for maturation understanding your community, learning to communicate with others, working through status games, building and maintaining friendships, working through personal values, etc. These learning opportunities can turn social and recreational peer-based learning that kids are doing out-of-school in learning opportunities that matter for school.

Marie (16) uses peer groups for school matters at home but she is more interested in self-learning:

*'When I don't understand something I just have look on YouTube first. I want to try by myself before asking, and then if I still do not get it then I contact my classmates via Messenger or What up or I face time them.
For photo editing I look into other people's instagram account and try to copy what I see, that is the way I have learnt'*

(Marie, 16)

Ana's (18) peer group learning reveals to be very important at university level where more independence from learners is expected (Jenkins, 2007).

'when we have an exam I turn to other students for help, it is not only about the subject, it is about knowing they are there for you. It is emotional, I don't feel alone. Some of them have already taken the exam once and failed and other times they ask me because they know I had good marks, I help also with things I understand better'

(Ana, 18)

Collaborative and mentored by peers

Lave & Wenger, (1991); Moll, (1990); and Renshaw, (2002), suggest that true learning happens when learners are part of a community of practice which with they feel connected. True learning is when a student fully engages, practices, and masters a skill, set of knowledge, or practice, it is the kind of learning that leads people to remember, use, and build knowledge. Real learning happens in communities with specific goals and ways of communicating, in which newcomers must learn and practice as they join the group helped by experienced members who teach new members how to participate through a kind of apprenticeship or mentoring. In the literature Vygotsky (1981) suggests that we learn through our interactions and communications with others, through the interaction with peers and communities. This is evidenced in the way young people are using SNSs and communities of practice for informal learning (Selwyn 2009; Madge et al 2009; Mazman & Usluel 2010).

Data from this study shows that participants make use of collaborative learning outside school for interest and academic driven practices:

'I learn a lot from more expert models on how to use Instagram because they have more experience, more followers, more likes, they give me advice, not on how to edit the photos, but on framing photos, on what to put on my Insta story, put this, put these tags, tag the photographer, tag the agency to have more offers, put this on your bibliography, yeah, it is kind of a coach (...) I want my photos to be up to the level also and to the viewers'

(Marie, 16)

Ana's (18) collaborative practices are linked to her video producing activities, she often posts on YouTube, and she recognises that she has a

reputation to keep among peers that she has built little by little. She follows people she admires in order to become more skilful and hone her learning about video producing.

'I look around (on YouTube) and learn, but I also send messages to people that are good or that I enjoy what they do, I get ideas. I also talk to friends that I know personally and do the same, but I think I am the one who knows the most, and I help others so maybe I am the expert!'

(Ana, 18)

Both participants perceive these out-of-school collaborative social practices as positive for academic matters because they allow them to share links, instant chats, check university or school tests results and even organise social events with friends and peer. The benefits of social media use for informal learning are related to accessibility, permanent availability of connection and the ability to communicate with university/school peers using diverse apps at the same time:

'It is always better to be with someone either on FB, Insta etc. or meet them'

(Marie, 16)

4.3.1 Summary of Peer-based and Self-directed Learning Online and Study Research Questions

1. How do participants use digital media for literacy practices?

Peer-based learning is about learning within a community of practice (Sefton-Green, 2013) and about engagement with the digital culture, which offers, potential for self-directed learning through networked communities and endless resources to support knowledge independently of the attributes of formal or informal learning (Weigel, James & Gardner, 2009). In peer-based learning participants in this study develop their forms of multimodal expression to construct meaning within those communities and facilitate interaction with peers.

2. How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multiple kinds of digitalised texts?

Participants make meaning of themselves by positioning in peer-based learning as users or mentors either for interest-driven practices or for academic related subjects. Their identity is constructed in relation to the multimodal communication exchanges with peers and the roles they assume. Being seen as an expert member of a group helps identity construction and concurs with the literature that sees a supportive peer group the primary social arena in which teenagers develop a sense of identity as they experiment with a variety of social roles and decision-making (Brown, 1990; Sherif & Sherif 1964). Participants also identify by developing a sense of

belonging and acceptance (Hillier & Harrison, 2007). As Livingstone (2008) voiced in the literature regarding these practices online:

‘It seems that creating and networking online content is becoming, for many, an integral means of managing one’s identity, lifestyle and social relations’

(Livingstone, 2008, p. 4)

This extends, as my own study suggests, to peer-based learning in digital environments.

3-How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?

We know that peer-based learning happens in communities of practice online (Wenger, E. (2000) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, but the conversation we should be having as researchers, educators and parents is one about how to translate these peer-based practices happening in informal settings into more academic, accountable and recognised ones to ground school learning in practice, to connect teenagers’ experience to lifelong learning focused on topics of continuing interest to them. In the two participants in this study these practices translated into video producing for Ana (18); a media and communication student and learning from peers about the modelling profession for Marie (16). These are real life activities that are rewarding and positive for both participants. For Ana, because of the obvious links with her studies and for Marie (16) as part of her curriculum vitae work experience for university applications.

The practices of these two teenagers suggest that the answer could be maybe not as much trying to connect out-of-school and in-school peer-based learning in this case for multiliteracy practices and identity, but rather not to disconnect in an artificial way learning practices that are happening across the board. In out-of-school settings these practices are driven by interest and supported by peers, in many schools these approaches have already been or are being implement with different degrees of success. Research on multiliteracies and identity seem to be of the same mind. Sefton-Green (2004, p.6) suggests that the differences between informal and formal learning can be 'more clearly made around the intentions and structure of the learning experience in itself'. New paradigms about literacy are emerging around key concepts of digital practice, multimodality, networked learning, participatory practice, eLearning, gaming, and anytime, everywhere learning. New media literacy is about producing multimodal multiliterate texts and developing in teenagers their critical thinking about what they see online, to act as responsible consumers and disseminators of content.

Multiliteracies and Multimodal Practices

New media literacy is about multimodal multiliterate texts. These texts that teenagers use and produce rely on processing several modes simultaneously in order to construct meaning. For example, Ana (18) while relaxing on the sofa may be listening to her favourite music, speaking to her sister, interacting with a website, or checking her messages on her smartphone. She needs to be able to understand and use these different semiotic systems.

Multiliteracy is concerned with these multiple modes of meaning making (Cazden et al., 1996). A person is multiliterate when s/he recognizes that a particular context requires certain literacy practices, and when s/he can strategically apply those practices to that setting (Antsey & Bull, 2006).

New media are driving new practices that are profoundly affecting many aspects of teenagers' daily lives and learning (Ling, 2008; Ito et al., 2008; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Baron, 2008). This new media builds on relationships, interests and passions purposely orientated that motivate teenagers to want to go further and learn more. On the other hand, technical features facilitate and alter new multimodal media languages that reflect in literacy practices (more informal and short, mixing codes, videos, music etc.). New media literacy provides teenagers with the technical and evaluative skills required to access, understand, produce, and participate in digital media (Third et al., 2014). Communicative and social networking literacy was present in genres of participation, where different functions in friendship and interest driven practices were established based on the data in this study, and the framework of analysis; how they were managed by participants mainly in SNSs, and how participants' decisions were consciously made to serve those purposes (Buckingham, 2008). In networked publics I discussed that participants were aware of an audience, of the blurred relationship between public and private, and of the different ways they employed to set limits. In peer-based learning, participants showed a shift in focus from individual expression to community involvement, implicating the development of social skills through collaboration and networking (Jenkins, 2009). In new media

literacy learning, the data from participants points out to their multimodal multiliteracy practices:

'I do a lot of things at the same time, have different apps open, I can post photos, record messages or write, I write a lot in fact and I also read a lot'

(Ana, 18)

Figure 4.22: Marie (16) using two smartphones



Participants show technical literacy in the skills needed to use a computer, smartphone, web browser, Apps, but have little awareness on critical content literacy or questioning credibility or nature of the information, only Ana has an opinion on this:

'When I have to look for information, for example for economics, I go to The Economist because I know what they say is good, I also check several sites for the same information but that's it. It is something I do personally not according to something I know'

'I do not always say where I got the information from, and I copy and paste sometimes, I know I shouldn't but I change words and it seems mine, yeah, I have a problem with that'

(Ana, 16)

Research in the literature has indicated that SNSs can support the development of multiliteracy through the creation and sharing of content for communication and self-expression (Coiro et al., 2008; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Perkel, 2008), however these forms of SNSs primary meaning: written texts, photos, animations, sounds, music, videos, are still missing from school curricula (Ito et al., 2008; Skaar, 2008).

How do we translate these achievements that teenagers succeed in having in their digital world into achievements that have positive consequences and are visible in their adult lives?

(Ito et al., 2013) wonder how the connections can be made so that more teenagers take advantage of those interest-driven practices than only a few seem to be able to develop. Their research synthesizes an approach to education to foster new media literacies based in connected learning, it advocates for broadened access to learning that is socially embedded, interest-driven, and oriented toward educational, economic, or political opportunity. Connected learning is realized when a young person is able to pursue a personal interest or passion with the support of friends and caring adults and is in turn able to link this learning and interest to academic achievement, career success or civic engagement.

4.4.1 Summary of New Media Literacy and Study Research Questions

1- How do participants use digital media for literacy practices?

When teenagers, share content, create and maintain relationships, when they engage in interest-driven practices, they are fostering the development of their multiliteracies and technical skills (Notley & Tacchi, 2005). Participants in this study create and share content in SNSs, and these practices are springboards for them to experiment with digital media creation and self-expression. 'Through participation in social network sites such as Facebook, (among others) as well as instant and text messaging, they are constructing new social norms and forms of media literacy in networked publics culture that reflect the enhanced role of media in young people's lives', (Ito et al., 2008, p.30).

2-How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multiple kinds of digitalised texts?

In genres of participation, teenagers in this study construct their identities through self-expression (Notley & Tacchi, 2005) of their cultural backgrounds (Ana's (18) Spanish identity) (Blanchard, et al., 2008), by positioning ideologically and situating themselves in social contexts as individuals and part of a community (Coleman & Rowe, 2005; Boyd & Ellison, 2007). For identity construction new media literacy has proved to be essential for teenagers in this study because it is through productions and consumptions or multimodal multiliteracy texts that they are able to make meaning of themselves.

3-How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?

Most educational institutions in Europe have integrated into their teaching e-learning frameworks and have digital campuses, and www.openeducationeuropa.eu and www.schooleducationgateway.eu are websites run by the EC that aim at share best practice on online innovative education. Policies are changing as well, for example, in the case of France a national digital skills and jobs coalition has just been launched in November 2017. In the initial report it was highlighted the need to influence policy makers in order to create policies supporting digital skills development, including more unconventional approaches to education. However, peer-based learning, which as I have discussed in this study is at core of teenagers' own learning outside school (Ito et al., 2008) is still far from being implemented in everyday educational practices.

4.5 In and Out-of-school Practices

'If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow'

(John Dewey, 1944, p. 167)

A number of scholars (Lewis & Fabos, 2005; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Bulfin & North, 2007) have written about the existing disconnect or gap between in and out-of-school multiliteracy and identity construction practices and have emphasized the difficulty to transfer contexts: the

informal nature of what teenagers do out-of-school and the formal characteristics of education seem to be just incompatible. Theme 5 in this study addresses this issue in relation to the other themes analysed. The gap between in and out-of-school multiliteracies was original to the data collected and did not come from the framework of analysis but for the participants own experiences. The following section explores the ideological construct of this gap between in and out-of-school multiliteracy practices in teenagers and the four sub-themes that derived from it:

- Connectivity and access
- Teachers' training and teaching approaches
- Limitations from school and curriculum
- Learners' and parents' awareness

Connectivity and access to meet real needs

One of the main basics to be able to be an active consumer and producer of multidigital texts is to own a device and having access to connectivity. Teenagers expect interactivity, and their generation has been described as 'experiential, engaged, and constantly connected, with a strong need for immediacy'(Ramalay & Zia, 2005, p. 87), but they still need to count on technical affordances that allow them to be part of the digital world. Research indicates that access to internet-based resources is related to/restricted by income, and this is creating new class divisions between those who have access to tech and fast internet connections, and those that

have not (Hargittai, 2010; Jenkins, 2006; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Therefore, schools can be an ideal environment to promote equal use of technology and supply all learners with the technology facilities to do so. According to research from the OECD 2016 report on digital use, even if equal access is provided, this does not imply equal opportunities, because disadvantaged users are less likely to be aware of the opportunities that digital technology offers. This report urges to develop young people's literacy skills to reduce digital inequality.

In this study data confirmed that participants did not experience lack of connectivity due to economic reasons and could also enjoy different state of the art personal devices as reported in table 3.4. Nevertheless, the participants were aware that lack or malfunctioning of the internet resulted in poor practices and frustration:

'The worst is when there is no internet at home then there is nothing I can do. The second worse when it goes really slow'

(Ana, 16)

'I get really mad when it doesn't work (internet) or it is too slow, it is a real pain, (...) because I feel isolated and I don't know what to do either'

(Marie, 16)

Teachers' training and teaching approaches

A lot of research has focused on the generational gap among educational stakeholders. The acceptance of a teenage digital generation that impacts in

the way teenagers make use of the digital compared to adults considered as digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001) has been critiqued and is controversial in the sense that it is difficult to draw a line between digital natives and digital immigrants, suggesting that this may be an artificial divide (Buckingham, 2008). A lot of resources are allocated by governments to train teachers in the use of technology in the classroom (See for example) : https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/expert-groups/digital-skills-competences_en https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/2017-pla-digit-skills-gap_en.pdf. Some of these policies come from outside demands to the teachers themselves and not from real perceived needs as this study suggests and my own previous MOE2 research (Rodriguez, 2013). The participants in this study view their teachers' digital skills as characterised by poor levels of technical expertise:

'My teacher doesn't know what he is doing, he gets nervous because sometimes it does not work, or he doesn't understand, it is a waste of time, he says it is time that we lose to study the things we need to pass the exams'

(Marie, 16)

'I do not need a computer specialist, I need a teacher that knows what she is doing when she teaches'

(Ana, 18)

But, on the other hand, they seem to be more interested in what teachers can do with technology for learning linked to participants' interests outside school:

'Last year I had a good teacher, I mean very much into everything digital, but then it was not that interesting, I did not learn much I could use'.

Me: 'Why?'

'I already knew most of it'

(Marie, 16)

'I really don't get why they make us go, it is a total waste of time, we go to lessons that we can watch from home on the school site, we attend tutorials where the teacher spends time online explaining the homework we have to do that is already on the platform...it's soooo boring!'

'Me: And what do you do in class then?'

'The usual stuff, I check my messages, or I do other homework so I do not waste my time'

(Ana, 18)

Most of these impressions come from restricting participants space to guide their own learning using technology.

The European Commission report (2017, p.4): (https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/2016-pla-digital-higher-education_en.pdf), highlights that 'in order to drive and manage digitalisation, teachers need to develop their skills. This means that initial and in-service training of staff should include innovation in pedagogy and the use of technology'. Although this is meant specifically for HE, it may extend to the teenagers and teachers' situation in middle and high schools as well. Experiences reported in this study confirmed that teachers need to learn about different technological tools, but also how to use these to create multimodal products that involved negotiating meaning, identity and culture

as technology allows for integration of multiple semiotic resources simultaneously. Likewise, as suggested by my own research in MOE2 teachers would be more compelled to use some of these technologies in their future practice if they themselves realized their potential for bridging previously separated spaces, namely teenagers' in and out-of-school practices. Teenagers in this study do not seem to be looking for teachers that are digital experts, but mainly for teachers that foster and encourage teenagers' passions and interests online put to the service of learning.

Participants in this study were positive about developing passions and interests in school and supported peer-based learning and mentoring. They wish to see technology in the classrooms, but also the incorporation of multimodal texts and multiliteracies that show sophisticated forms of representation that are already employed and valued in teenagers' lives. As Alvermann (2002) contends:

'Culturally responsible instruction, then, is to call for teaching that takes into account every day, patterned interfaces between home/community and school literacy practices'

(Alvermann, 2002, p. 197)

'I like working with others, and sharing, it is more fun, also when I like what I do or I am interested it is better'

(Marie, 16)

Researches such as Ito et al., (2013, p.8), are pushing for more interest-driven frameworks and theories to understand and support learning that is 'connected' to teenagers' interests. In particular as the teenage period is a

critical time when individuals form interests and social identities that are key to the connected learning model. Connected learning 'takes root when teenagers find peers who share interests, when academic institutions recognize and make interest-driven learning relevant to school, and when community institutions provide resources and safe spaces for more peer-driven forms of learning. These spaces are not confined necessarily to online worlds'. Examples of some interest-driven academic programmes in the US use maths, chess, or robotics competitions tied to in-school recognition.

Studies like the present one, which are interested in what teenagers are doing as they engage in digital culture of various kinds in their leisure time at home, provide insights into the nature of contemporary communication, including engagement, collaboration and participation, the social, literacy and learning practices that are involved in teenage presence in online worlds, and the ways in which meanings are made in these contexts, in particular through viewing literacy as design. Indeed, an important principle for much work in this vein is, to understand the *emergent* nature of these spaces and sites, and the forms of literacy, identity and community, among other things, that such participation enables and entails (Leadbeater, 2008 ; Robinson, 2006).

Limitations from school and curriculum

Out-of-school multiliteracies reflect that the participants' digital practices in this study are not primarily 'educational', they are about enjoying their free time: pursuing hobbies, sports and leisure interests, chatting and exchanging instant messages with friends, playing games, and downloading pop music

and movies in different degrees of engagement and expertise. Nevertheless, research tells that learning occurs and that these subjects are of interest for scholars as I discussed in the literature. For instance, Gee (2007) on learning with video games, Chandler-Olcott & Mahar (2003) on learning from online discussion groups; Lewis & Fabos (2005) on IM, literacies and social identities in teenagers; Bulfin & North (2007) on ICT in teenagers' everyday lives and literacy practices in and out school, or more recently, Sefton-Green's project (2017): *Researching the Everyday Digital in Children's Lives* based at Deakin University. We also know, as Moje & Tysvaer (2010) remark, that youth who use literacy out-of-school appear to have high levels of proficiency in reading and writing sophisticated texts, even among those identified as 'struggling' in school. Participants, in agreement with the literature, felt that school was not the appropriate arena to develop friendship-driven practices and they were unwilling to share online with all the class certain aspects of their identity. They also complained about the restrictions and blocking of the internet, SNSs, and phone banning within their schools as a real source of frustration (Selwyn, 2006):

'In school I do not choose my friends they are imposed, I mean you have to take the whole pack or what the teacher says'

(Marie, 16)

'Sometimes I just went to the toilet and called'

Me: 'and if they see you'

'then, I'm in trouble'

(Ana, 18)

Marie talks about the situation when she arrived in her new school in India and found out that the use of the laptop was a requirement in most courses. Access to the internet was also granted under no conditions. She thought it was a mistake. Mobile phones were, nevertheless banned in this school as they were in the one she attended in France.

'I was coming from my school in France where laptops and telephones were ultra forbidden. I had this small laptop in class that look like a normal one but had only this software that the school had created and it was like not useful, you could not keep your records or downloads or the browsing history, it was like being given a toy phone to call your friends, ridiculous!'

'I think it was to avoid distraction, not for security reasons, like sometimes what they taught was sooooo boring or useless that we will all be on our phones if we could!'

(Marie, 16)

So, how can institutions introduce curriculums that keep pace with the changes brought up by digital media?

First of all, changes are already happening in schools, advances in technology are enabling profound changes in education content, delivery, and accessibility. Most institutions have an educational platform where syllabuses, content of courses, videos, lectures etc. are made public for learners to use; this did not exist years ago. Universities and courses online, MOOCs and other kinds of digital learning and teaching are also there, Wi-Fi environments, better and faster access to the internet in schools, and a genuine interest in making digital progress. SNSs sites like the ones participants of this study use help to democratize information, remove control from the curriculum-bound classrooms, question the learning and the

teachers' role in education, and allow teenagers to explore and pursue interests freely. This study suggests that there is in fact a gap between delivery modes in and out-of-schools not in settings, what is taught in school, and what and how teenagers are learning out-of-school. This has an impact on their future lives because they will be working in a world that resembles more to the one they experience on their own than in-school. Curricula and pedagogy needs to bet on multimodal multiliteracy practices to build on teenagers' knowledge, experiences and interests (Jewitt, 2003).

Curricula that address 'new literacies' are structured around a view of literacy that according to the literature, takes into account the changing and multimodal nature of textual forms, and the communicative and cultural practices of teenagers as they engage digitally. These curricula also need to raise questions about the kinds of expectations teenagers have as users and producers of online digital culture and communication.

'I want to learn things that are useful, or I want to see the useful part in the things I have to learn'

(Ana, 18)

Learner's and Parents' awareness

The data indicated that one of the 'worse' things that could happen to the participants was that the Wi-Fi at home did not work, or that we went on holiday to a place with no internet connection, followed by restrictions or punishments by parents and teachers on phone usage. Participants

recognised that they try all kinds of techniques to make parents feel guilty and insecure in order to deter them from shutting off the internet or taking away their phones:

'Not now, I have to study, I really need the internet otherwise I can't do my homework'

(Marie,16)

'Frankly, dad it is so childish from you to confiscate it (the phone), can't you find anything better to punish me with? What If I have an emergency, or a miss the bus, it is your responsibility then...'

(Ana, 18)

The literature concurs with teenagers in this study that parents could instead begin with 'an appreciation of the importance of youth social interactions with their peers, and an understanding of their complexities (Ito et al., 2008, p.37), that is why studies like the present one can help to understand those complexities. 'If parents can trust that their own values are being transmitted through their on-going communication with their children, then new media practices can be sites of shared focus rather than anxiety and tension' (Ibid). Research is also clear about the benefits of parents as co-producers and co-users of digital media and their impact on teenagers' digital lives (Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, 2012; Lareau, 2000; Livingstone et al ., 2015).

Most learners, including the ones in this study do not see informal out-of-school practices as prestigious as the ones taking place in formal settings. For that learning and practices to be considered prestigious there must be a certain formal recognition and institutional accountability. Ana (18) talking about how important grades are for her Baccalaureate :

'No matter what you do or how well, at the end you always have to have a grade'

(Ana, 18)

On the other hand, as I have discussed in Theme 3 of this study, they do consider peer-based learning and mentoring useful and prestigious in interest-driven practices to learn and build a reputation (Ito et al., 2008).

In consequence, learning in out-of-school settings matters tremendously for the learning that takes place in formal settings. It is part of an already existing set of understandings that educators have of the importance of the home, the peers and the community environment for the learning that takes place in schools (Ito et al., 2013). The concern is how to make the link between these two environments more active and valuable for teenagers' future lives. For teachers and schools there is an incredible important role to play to give teenagers access across the board to a basic set of standards and literacies on what they need to participate in contemporary society, to be reflective of teenagers' learning, and to take opportunity of the fact that there are in a shared space that gives them the ways to participate in different aspects of teenagers' lives.

4.5.1 Summary of In and Out of School Practices and Study Research Questions

1- How do participants use digital media for literacy practices?

Teenagers in this study communicate in multimodal ways and express their multiliteracies mainly through SNSs in out-of-school environments. These kinds of communication, collaboration, and online textual practices in which they engage outside school shape their expectations of what learning and multiliterate communication practices should be in school:

'I would like to feel free to submit using not only written stuff, to use what I do well (video producing), images etc., in class, to switch languages, to link with someone in another country to see what his/her view is about the same matter, not only my teacher, to make my own choices within the syllabus according to my interests..., yeah, that would be great!'

(Ana, 18)

'I have used my modelling experiences for CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service), but I really had to fight with the school and teachers, so they would understand this is also creative, why?'

(Marie, 16)

Participants feel that what they do during their free time at home is not acknowledged as valuable practices that can be incorporated in formal settings. They are aware that there is a need to engage with their peer cultures and recreational lives at home if school wants to take advantage of what networked media offers for learners. To develop multimodal multiliteracies, the school role will focus more on facilitating and supporting multiliteracies as more learners will be relying on independent and peer learning via technology.

2- How do participants make meaning of themselves across the production of multiple kinds of digitalised texts ?

Participants in this study do not perceive their online identities as separate of the offline ones, and therefore coincide with the literature (Alvermann et al., 2012; Holloway & Valentine, 2003; Kendall, 2002; Lange, 2007; Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). They position themselves in relation to the way and the modes with which they communicate and the people with whom they interact. What participants do in their leisure time is fundamentally social in nature and entails learning through negotiations and peer relations. Participants in this study made meaning of themselves out-of-school by showing their engagement with such multimodal texts and technologies. Their interactions with others, and the kinds of opportunities, communities and behaviours they encounter, positive and negative, shape their sense of themselves, of others, and of their world.

3-How do these out-of-school multiliteracies and identity practices articulate to educational purposes for these teenagers?

The growing mass of resources online, and the increased availability and use of mobile and internet-based platforms, affect where, what and from whom we learn. As I have discussed, connectivity and affordances, multiliteracy content and teaching methods that include the digital but also know what to do with it and that make social and recreational peer-based learning matter in the classroom will be the trend in the future.

Our teens have access to information, to experts, to communities of learning at their fingertips, something that is very different from previous generations. We, as researchers, educators and parents are happy to see them forming study groups on FB, going online to find information, or develop areas of speciality, and less eager when they spend time socialising, visiting sites where they can find homework done ready to upload, or when they copy and paste texts freely without questioning. We acknowledge that the circulation and sharing of knowledge or information is very difficult to hold back and avoid. But we can, on the other hand, look at all these practices as real opportunities for multiliteracy learning exploration and identity construction. All the online learning resources that they have at present, offer the opportunity to close the gap between more and less privileged learners, but also between homes and schools where teenagers can develop their passions and be recognised for it, connecting the learning that already happens in out-of-school multiliteracy practices to the one in the classroom. Outside school, teenagers get together because they have the allowances to connect, for a purpose and for a public. A school that responds successfully to the challenges of current multiliteracy practices is a school that meets learner's interests, that offers ubiquitous connectivity, with teachers that are digitally capable and multiliterate and have adapted their teaching approach, and with learning that is aligned with learners' real needs in the world in which they communicate and interact, and in consequence in and out-of-school environments.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This research employed an ethnographic illustrative case study to explore two teenagers' multiliteracy practices, their identity construction and the relation between their in and out-of-school digital practices. Unlike other studies which look into adolescents' digital practices (Alvermann, 2002, 2007; Black, 2007; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Gee, 2003, 2008; Kirkland, 2009; Thomas, 2007), this study adds to existing literature in that it sought to understand teenagers' practices at home from their own perspectives linked to genres of participation to highlight the value and nature of those practices. While Ito et al. (2010) and Boyd (2014) have looked at examples of American teenagers' new media practices in a wide range of situations, the present study contributes to knowledge from a European multilingual perspective of teenager's new media practices at home. Many of the findings concur with existing knowledge, but the contribution of this study lies in its aim to capture teenagers' perspectives in bringing together how their practices influence their multiliteracies, their identity construction and the possible links between what they do in and out-of-school settings. It also sought to inform parents in a more comprehensive way about their teenage children's digital practices in their leisure time and the importance these practices have for their academic, professional, personal and social learning.

As I had justified in Chapter One, studies like this are opportune and necessary. Chapter Two discussed the need for a new literacy approach linked to prevailing technological and globalised characteristics, the importance of teenagers' multiliteracies and identity construction and its relationship with in and out of school settings. Chapter Three argued the methodological approach and the methods employed in the study in order to answer the research questions. Chapter Four presented and explored the participants' views from the field, put those views together, situated the research within current literature and discussed findings to contribute to existing knowledge. In this final Chapter Five, I synthesise what has been learned from this task and draw conclusions. Implications for professional practice, educational policy, parents and teenagers, limitations and future research and dissemination are summarised in this chapter.

5.1 Conclusions and Contribution to Existing Knowledge

The conclusions derived from the findings are the following:

- 1- Teenagers are consumers and producers of multiliterate practices in out-of-school settings
- 2- Teenagers' multiliteracy practices are used to construct identity
- 3- Identity also influences the nature of multiliteracy practices
- 4- Online and offline identity are artificial constructs
- 5- Teachers, policy makers, parents and teenagers themselves need to change perceptions regarding new media literacy practices in informal settings

- 6- There is a gap that is not linked to in or out-of-school settings but to practices in general, in particular to the understanding that adults have about the value of teenagers' engagement with digital activities in informal settings as something uncongenial to learning.

Specifically the research contributes to existing knowledge in the following ways:

This research found that the digital out-of-school identity construction and multiliteracy practices are articulated around genres of participation:

- are friendship and interest-driven
- are based on interactions with peer groups and are used to maintain friendships and family ties (hanging out)
- are based on participants specific identities
- online and offline identities are not independent
- are used to position themselves in the community
- foster experimentation and play (messing around)
- challenge restrictions and rewrite the rules (geeking out)
- online and offline divide does not exist
- takes place in multiple contexts online
- are used to communicate

This research found that networked publics:

- are seen by participants as dangerous for their identity construction in some cases
- are seen as valuable audience to express themselves and get feedback on multiliteracies and identity

This research found that peer-based learning:

- is collaborative by nature and makes use of mentoring
- values informal learning from peers in in and out-of-school settings.

This research found that new media literacy:

- uses and produces multiliteracy and multimodal practices
- these practices are associated with personal constructed identities

This research found that the gap between in and out-of-school practices:

- is aggravated by lack of connectivity and access
- is reliant in teachers' training and teaching approaches
- is influenced by digital limitations from schools and curriculum
- requires change of mentality from parents and learners

5.2 Implications for Professional Practice

As an academic in a public university in France this study has been an important learning experience for me. We welcome teenage students who arrive at the university with the hope that learning will lead them into the professional lives they will experience in the future.

My own research and practice have confirmed that there is a need to rethink pedagogy to accommodate the changes in literacy in the digital era and a need to listen to what teenagers and young adults in general do in their leisure time to inform this pedagogy. This is not new, and researchers such as: Bolstad et al., (2012); Boyd, (2014); Cook-Sather, (2006); Fielding, (2001); Ito et al. (2013); Livingstone, (2001); Rudduck & McIntyre, (2007); Sefton-Green, (forthcoming), are studying how positioning students as partners in learning can articulate different ways to consider in and out-of-school literacies and to engage with teenagers who are already eager consumers of digital media applied to socialising and interest-driven practices in out-of-school environments.

The present study was not based on teachers' perceptions or observation of actual pedagogical practices and therefore, can only make tentative suggestions in its implications for professional practice. There were hints in the participants' data on what they expected from teachers' digital practices at school, but again this is the opinion of two particular teenagers in a quite specific setting. Despite the fact that this is a case study of two participants, knowing more about their digital multiliteracies practices and about how

these teenagers express themselves in the world and construct their can contribute to have a clearer idea of these practices.

The NLG suggested in 1996 a pedagogy of multiliteracies that includes all the members of a community as the designers of their own social, workplace, public and community future; proposing classroom practices that embed basically four components:

1. Situated Practice, which is based on the world of learners.
2. Overt Instruction, through which students shape for themselves an explicit metalanguage of design.
3. Critical Framing, which relates meanings to learners' social contexts and purposes.
4. Transformed Practice, in which students, as meaning-makers, become designers of social futures (New London Group, 1996).

The data from this research project has highlighted that the participants do not only want teachers technologically competent but also technologically multiliterate, that is to say, teachers that effectively use technology to access, evaluate, integrate, create and communicate information to enhance the learning process.

From a more personal experience, this research process has helped my professional practice by putting into place a system of mentoring to introduce digital multiliteracy practices to future teachers from the language department of the Savitribai Phule Pune University in Pune (India) where I am teaching right now, and where professional development is scarce. I

believe that developing professional learning networks is vital for teachers to increase professional growth, to feel part of the teaching community and to push innovation in practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002). My former department at the UCP in France will also benefit from my research and findings as indicated in the dissemination table in Appendix I.

5.3 Implications for Education Policy

Explicitly implied by this study expanding definitions of multiliteracies and multimodality could bring a change in education policy. This new understanding of what learners need has to rely on a system that supports this model. This might not be necessarily the case for many schools yet. The capacity of the teachers to respond to new conceptions of literacy is reliant in some cases to individual teachers' initiatives and the recognition by schools of the importance of bringing out-of-school multiliteracy practices into the classroom (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Learners could benefit from multiliteracy and multimodal approaches that take into account their multiliteracy experiences in out-of-school environments. In relation to that, these multimodal multiliteracies could be part of the assessment system to be considered accountable in mainstream education.

Some initiatives towards recognising current practices are taking place, for example on 26th September 2017 France signed *The French Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition* (<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/national-digital-skills-and-jobs-coalition-launched->

[france](#)), to boost adequate skills for job and life in the digital era. It emphasizes the need to influence policy makers in order to create policies supporting digital skills development, including more unconventional approaches to education. Similarly, the London School of Economics and Political Science are conducting a three-year (2014-2017) research project on *Preparing for a Digital Future*. The research led by Professor Livingstone is undertaking a series of qualitative case studies to investigate how children and young people, along with their parents, carers, mentors and educators imagine and prepare for their personal and work futures in a digital age. In 2014, *The Students Change Agents' Network* (<https://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org/wp/outcomes/the-student-digital-experience-in-2020/>) published a compendium of ideas from staff and students foreseeing what the digital experience for the curriculum will look like in 2020, some of the conclusions they reached were:

- 'More individualised education: *'Education is adapted to every student's own learning style (education is available in multi formats/styles).'*'
- More adaptable to external circumstances and demands: *'Dynamic curriculums taking on board current learning and world needs', 'fluid'*
- More *'authentic', 'problem based', 'skills-based', 'aligned with current issues'*, taking on board *'global ideas?'*
- More involvement of students directly in curriculum design/development.

- Blurring of boundaries between formal/informal so e.g. spontaneous learning events alongside formal curriculum.
- Faster feedback due to largely online assessment, and/or assessment may be based more on real-world value and impact of what has been learned.'

These examples are an indication that the panorama is already changing, and that research can contribute to inform policies about teenagers' real uses of technology and social media as tools to support and enhance their digital multiliteracy learning and identity construction practices.

5.4 Implications for Parents and Teenagers

Teachers and policy makers are not the only ones concerned by digital change. In this research participants were clear about the importance they gave to their digital practices outside school. Research in the literature also indicated that a family environment that shows interest and supports teenagers is key to relate in and out-of-school practices (Bulfin & Koutsogiannis, 2012; Lareau, 2000; Livingstone et al., 2015). Parents that understand the nature of teenagers' digital practices at home as something more than a waste of time are central for multiliteracy development and identity construction. This study has highlighted the nature and importance of digital practices at home for two teenagers. More studies like the present one could lead to a change in parents' mentality through information about

teenagers' digital practices in general and the role in their lives, learning and education.

Teenagers, on the other hand, need to value their friendship and interest-driven practices as forms of worthy expression and social behaviours, and as ways to acquire technical and media literacy (Ito et al., 2008) contributing to their cultural and economic capitals (Bourdieu, 1986). A way for this to be implemented would be to encourage positive relationships and meaningful practices between informal and school settings so that teenagers can realise that multiliteracy is not only developed at school, but that it is a collaborative process based in authentic purposes and interests regardless the settings. The participants in this study do not have a clear understanding of how school could or should use the digital to support their learning.

5.5 Limitations

Every study has a number of limitations that come from the design and methodology applied to the interpretation of results derived from it. Nevertheless, limitations arising from a study are not necessarily a negative aspect as they provide opportunities to make suggestions for future research (Bryman, 2012).

In spite that my efforts were directed at having a thesis well thought and organised based on the thesis proposal, the reflections of the panel members'

comments, and the support from my supervisor, I have been concerned about the following issues throughout the process:

Sample Size and External Validity

The present study was a small-scale study that used a purposive sample and therefore is not representative of the whole teenage population. In Chapter Three I argued the criteria to validate qualitative research and the reasons to undertake an ethnographic approach (Yin, 2003). Nevertheless, the purpose of the study was to explore and illustrate how two teenagers engaged in digital practices at home in their leisure time, and although I am aware that this cannot be generalised to other teenage populations, it is not for that reason that the force of a single example has to be underestimated (Flyvbjerg, 2006), and since the general lies in the particular, I believe that what we learn in a particular case can be transferred to similar situations.

The implications that come from how participants willingly express multiliteracy and identity construction in out of school environments in this study agree with larger studies in the literature in other countries (Ito et al, 2010; Boyd, 2014) and allow for the drawing of conclusions specifically directed to the particularities of the European context.

Methods of data collection and bias

Data may reflect *selection bias* (Robson, 2011) concerning participants in this study as they had a special relationship with the researcher (PAR), and therefore they may have been more motivated to help. Findings and conclusions drawn may not have been reflective of a wider teenage population with no relationship with the researcher.

Qualitative research also depends on personal opinions and views of participants that reflect their realities in a specific moment of their lives and on how the researcher represents those opinions and views (Bryman, 2012). I recognise as a social researcher that those views revealed by me can change overtime especially in social digital environments where technological advances are very quick.

The quantity of data generated by this study was bigger than what is actually included in this thesis. I selected data in accordance to the framework of analysis employed, my approach to this research, and the personal stance in 1.4, which have all influenced my study. I was very careful to state in a transparent way the methods of data collection and analysis informed by my professional experience, my experience as a parent of teenagers, and the knowledge of the literature. I also spent a lot of time considering all the ethical issues related to PAR and to doing research with young people. I had to remind myself frequently that I was a mere observer to avoid distorting data with my personal beliefs. Nevertheless, I undertook this research with some initial preconceived ideas about my role as a researcher, a teacher and

as a parent, on topics that have a meaningful interest in my professional and personal life. Some of those ideas have been challenged throughout the research. I have often questioned myself in choices I had made as a professional and a parent regarding my children and my students' multiliteracy digital practices. I have been frustrated by my own emotional responses at various stages of the thesis. These responses included: gratitude to my children for sharing their time, but most important their FB and Instagram accounts with me, their mother, and their thoughts, which I know is not an easy task for teenagers. Feeling upset other times, because they were not willing to share things that they thought too personal. I was proud to see what they managed to do online in their free time and, bothered with myself for all the times I was so ignorant of those practices. I felt empathy towards teenagers and the panoply of challenges they face in the digital world whether at home or school. Finally, I felt content in the hope that my research would make a useful contribution to the field. For me personally it has proved to be a contribution to my role as a researcher, academic and parent. I have, in the analysis and conclusion spoken of the important role of parents and teachers to liaise more informal practices between home and school settings, but a perspective from the point of view of what parents, and teachers feel, live and do is lacking from this research. I have triangulated data from participants, but the absence of teachers and parents' voices is a limitation of the study. Teenagers' multiliteracy practices and identity construction are not happening in an isolated bubble and their effects are determined by the impact upon learning in the academic, social and emotional spheres of their lives.

Finally, this study has not looked into teenagers in disadvantageous situations. For instance, the 2015 OECD PISA report on *Students, Computers and Learning*, shows that socio economic differences in how young people use the internet are strongly related to their academic performance. The report is also very clear about the need to develop young people's literacy skills to reduce digital inequality:

'Ensuring that every child attains a baseline level of proficiency in reading will do more to create equal opportunities in a digital world than will expanding or subsidising access to high-tech devices and services'.

(OECD, 2015, p. 16)

The AFD (Agence Française pour le Développement) (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002318/231867e.pdf>) together with the UNESCO (2015) published also a white paper on the conclusions of a study group that included representatives from development agencies, international bodies, NGOs, companies in the ICT, publishing sector and training institutions on the potential of technology for improving the quality of education in Africa. I quote this as an example of a developing continent where 'full and equal opportunities for education for all' are still underdeveloped. In this report the digital, with the improvement of teachers training and the spread of mobile devices is hopeful. In some countries, mobile learning is not necessarily dependent on the internet connection. SMS text services and voice services now mean that bandwidth problems can be sidestepped. E-books and e-courses, learning management systems for schools, serious games, tools for collaboration, personalised evaluation

services, preparation for tests and distance tutoring or help with homework are some of the fields that could grant access to education and literacy in and out of school.

Finally, this study had two teenage girls as the only participants and has not taken into consideration possible inequalities that may exist between teenage girls and boys regarding the way in which they construct their identities or practice multiliteracies in out-of-school environments.

5.6 Implications for Future Research

This study has not only answered the research questions related to multiliteracies and identity construction in out-of-school settings and their relationships with participants' perceptions of in-school practices, but it has also contributed to raising additional questions. Exploring teenagers' views of their digital practices, their will to tell others who they are through the multiliteracy choices they make, and the understanding of what drives them to connect in friendship and interest-driven practices contributing to identity construction and academic learning represents only an aspect of the complexities associated with teenagers and multiliteracy in the digital world (Alvermann, 2008; Holland et al. 1998). The present study served to shed some light onto their practices, their importance in teenagers' lives connected to literacy and identity in informal settings, and the interconnection of what happens online and offline (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kendall, 2002; Lange, 2008). More research in the field could address the

point of view of parents and teachers as important agents of change in developing positive attitudes towards teenagers' multiliteracies and identity construction through the digital world. Key themes in the literature linked to informal learning spoke of a necessity to learn more about approaches to digital practices and learning that is happening at home. Adolescents need to manage how to integrate knowledge from multiple sources and think critically about information that can be found on the net either for out or in-school needs. Friendship-driven and interest-driven genres of participation, which are fundamentally the result of teenagers' interests and motivations, can be integrated into schools and curricula without having to deal with institutionally constrained barriers. And research on how parents, who are worried about the time their children 'waste' online, can participate and learn more about their children out-of-school digital practices for a better understanding of the importance of sociality in friendship-driven, interest-driven and identity construction practices in their children's lives are aspects that could benefit from further research.

An exploration of the former themes on top of finding out more about how adolescents want to experience the digital in their lives independently of the contexts seem to me, as suggested by my own study, a direction in which research in the field could go.

A new kind of literacy is emerging, a literacy that is multimodal, multilingual and represents the expression and exchange of ideas for communication. Adolescents and children in general 'are already active participants and competent interpreters of their world' (Cobb et al., 2005, p.2) and identity

construction seems the result of a given social environment that is performed differently in varying contexts in response to different situations.

5.7 Dissemination

When I submitted the proposal for this study I was an active academic at the UCP university in Paris. I was part of a department that fostered the digital implementation in teaching and research. This thesis was one of the projects that were backed up by my department and a requirement to become 'maître des conférences' (senior lecturer) in France. Since then I have asked for an extended leave to accompany my husband to Pune (India) where he moved in 2016.

I am right now working part time as a visiting professor at the Savitribai Phule Pune University. I am part of the Spanish department and teach translation and teaching skills in a master's degree. The first outcome of my thesis will be a talk for teachers and students from different establishments in Pune about my findings and the implications for teachers' professional development and for students. I will also be participating in two workshops in February 2018 at SPPU about research methodology for master students from different departments. The following will be a talk in New Delhi, and another one for WIN (Women International Network) in Pune.

Although the opportunities are not the same in India as in France, academic work arouses great interest and colleagues are eager to learn from the

experiences of others. This study, while small-scale has implications for policy and practice related to digital multiliteracy and identity. It highlights the importance of teenagers' role as actors of their own learning, and I hope will contribute to change perceptions and support further developments on the importance of their digital leisure activities in their literacy and identity practices in general regardless of the context. A summary of indented dissemination of my research is provided in Appendix I.

5.8 Personal Achievements

This thesis constitutes the end of five years of research and work investment in which I have participated in two doctoral poster conferences about my IFS research, two doctoral student conferences at the IOE and one at Royal Holloway university that have helped me to acquire the skills to present my work to other research students, academics and scholars. I have participated in the 'Educate' journal of the IOE with a book review on *Presenting Your Own Research* by Lucinda Becker. Although I am aware that the scope of all this is limited, I am proud of these achievements. It is very difficult to attend conferences and give presentations when you are not founded by your university, which is my case in France and in India, when you have a full-time teaching timetable and are a full-time parent. My intention is to continue to contribute to knowledge to the best of my ability and resources. This year I have committed to launching a campaign among expatriates in Pune for book donations to the university language department libraries and I have joined

colleagues on a call for books for Kashmiri rural schools organised by the Kashmir University; I have collaborated with the Hispanic Film Festival that took place in December 2017 at the SPPU; I am part of the organising committee for the exhibition on the Spanish poet Gloria Fuertes to foster multiliteracy through poetry, posters, a short documentary and didactic materials for classrooms in different educational establishments in Pune. Finally, I have supervised the translation from English into Spanish of a children storybook from a local author by my master students, and readings of this book in Spanish and English are taking place in schools in Spain and India. We are now creating multimodal materials with the help of the children and teachers from the schools to back up the use of the book in the classrooms for multiliteracy development. Some of those materials will be digital. In 2018 the Spanish department at the SPPU will be also developing a free App to foster multiliteracy in English-Marathi schools, this App, aimed at children and teenagers is relying in part on the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Letter

I agree to take part in the study carried out by Julia Rodriguez, EdD International UCL/IOE from the Culture, Communication and Media department (CCL) at the IOE, University College of London.

I am willing to take part in the study called '**Exploring Digital Out-of-Class Identity Construction And Multiliteracy Practices Of Two Teenagers: Two Case Studies**'. I understand that the researcher from the University College of London, Institute of Education, London is hoping to describe the out of class literacy practices and how these contribute to Identity construction in teenagers. I understand that I will have informal conversations with the researcher, and will be observed and she will note down her observations when using my phone or computer in different situations at home and will have access to some of my written practices or photos. I will be asked about the sites I visit and for what uses. This study will take place in my home and should take about 6 months.

I am taking part because I want to. I have been told that I can stop at any time, and if I do not like a question, I do not have to answer it. The researcher will observe anonymity and confidentiality and I will have a word to say about all data collected about me.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Age: _____

APPENDIX B: Agreed Code of Conduct and Data Collection

Exploring Digital Out-of-Class Identity Construction and Multiliteracy Practices of Two Teenagers: Two Case Studies.

Julia Rodriguez, EdD International UCL/IOE from the Culture, Communication and Media department (CCM) at the University College of London, Institute of Education, London, is conducting a research study.

You were asked as a participant in this study because you are a teenager active on online social sites in the out-of-school environment. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and was discussed with you informally face to face before considering your participation.

Why is this study being done?

This study is being done as part of the EdD Doctorate programme in which I am enrolled. The study is designed to explore and describe the literacy patterns and the multiple identities teenagers seem to take in online social sites in the out-of-school environment and the relation of the former with more academic matters.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- *Let her carry out observation when online, mainly after school and during weekends
Casual conversations about use patterns, reasons for those patterns, forms of literacy used, roles when participating online...*
- *Access to samples of the comments produced and to what you do when active online*
- *Personnal comments on special conduct patterns and that can be recorded for further analysis*
- *Observation will take place mainly at home, but it can happen in any of the family leisure gatherings, such as outside lunches or social events if you are happy with that.*

How long will I be in the research study?

Participation will take a total of about 6 months starting December 2015.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

Because of your special relation with the researcher, discussions about what is allowed from both parties will take place all along the research process.

- *The researcher will ask you about your out-of-school practice habits of online social sites, how these influence the way you see yourself in the possible different roles and your literacy practices when using them. Therefore, the researcher will ask you to see some of the writing you produce when online. You are entitled to decide what the researcher can or cannot see. You can also decide on the days and times for observation or informal talks. You can express at any moment of the research concerns, discomforts or inconvenience and you will have a word to say on how these should be managed.*
- *As this study will be carried out by a parent as researcher (PAR), you have to acknowledge the possibility that her role as a researcher will interfere with her role as a parent and vice versa. Therefore, you should not expect research to be used as a token to gain access to certain privileges that are already established by your parents regarding your conduct, curfew, pocket money or any other possible advantages you may think you can draw from the research. Sometimes the role of the researcher when observing or talking to you will not be that of a parent, so the researcher expects comments that are not produced to please or bother her as a parent.*
- *This is also extended to talks in less informal settings (i.e. dinner time)*
- *Everything that will be included in the research will be presented for your approval before making it public or using it.*
- *To start with we (participants and researcher) have agreed to use some signs with the following messages to avoid misunderstandings or bad feelings when entering personal spaces:*

- *Not now, I am busy*
- *This is personal*
- *Not now, I am not in the mood*
- *Go ahead*
- *I do not wish to answer to that*
- *Later: At (specify time and place)_____*

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

You will not directly benefit from your participation in the research, (but I will appreciate it if you decide to do so).

The results of this research may help, parents, researchers, teachers, policy makers, yourself, to understand the influence of literacy practices in informal settings and the way in which teenagers express themselves, the rewards they seem to draw from being online and how the latter can inform digital practices in school.

Will information about my participation and myself be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of fictitious names, and by data safeguarded in only one personal computer with a password code and only accessible to the researcher.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research, you can talk, email, text or call me, or you can also use your other non-researcher parent if you have concerns or suggestions about the study or your participation in it.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Contact Number

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX C: Field Notes Template for Comprehensive Note Taking

TEMPLATE FOR TAKING FIELD NOTES	
Date: Site: Activity: Participants: Length of Observation:	
Summary Write a one paragraph summary or abstract of the day's events. Include analytic description, such as today was a good example of code switching.	
Narrative Write a detailed narrative of what you observed. Use (OC: _____.) for observer comments.	

Questions/Things to follow up with

Three dimensions of fieldwork	
Descriptive	Interpretative
Reflexive	
Descriptive fieldwork	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most objective (as objective as it can be) and the fieldworker is as detached as they can be from the participants they are describing.• Empiricist approach• Descriptive Fieldwork Example: I have a new comer, 11 students in the bilingual program, 8 students that are transiting out of the program, and 7 other students in my class. Three students that are in the bilingual program also have IEPs for a learning disability.	
Interpretative fieldwork	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the observer's stance of what they are observing.• More value-laden, subjective, and evaluative• Interpretative Fieldwork Example: My students are always working with each other, and helping each other learn. Some students are hardworking, others are lazy, and others go beyond their means to assure a good grade.	
Reflexive Fieldwork (teacher inquiry)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More introspective. Thinking about the change that is occurring to the fieldworker.• The observer's commentary• Analysis happening in this part• Reflexive Fieldwork Example: (OC: As a community, we've experienced a few issues this year that dealt with culture- there has been some conflict between a girl of Indian descent and a few of the girls who are Mexican American, and it required some intervention and discussion. My partner and I are concerned about bullying and intimidation in general, and have seen fifth- graders show social aggression before, but get especially worked up if anyone is picked on because of his or her ethnicity.)	

APPENDIX D: Example of Field Notes Taken from Observation

This is an example of a field note taken from participant observation in which I highlighted the kind of triangulation used to back up observations or transcripts.

Activity Triangle/Retrieved from www.elmsa.org

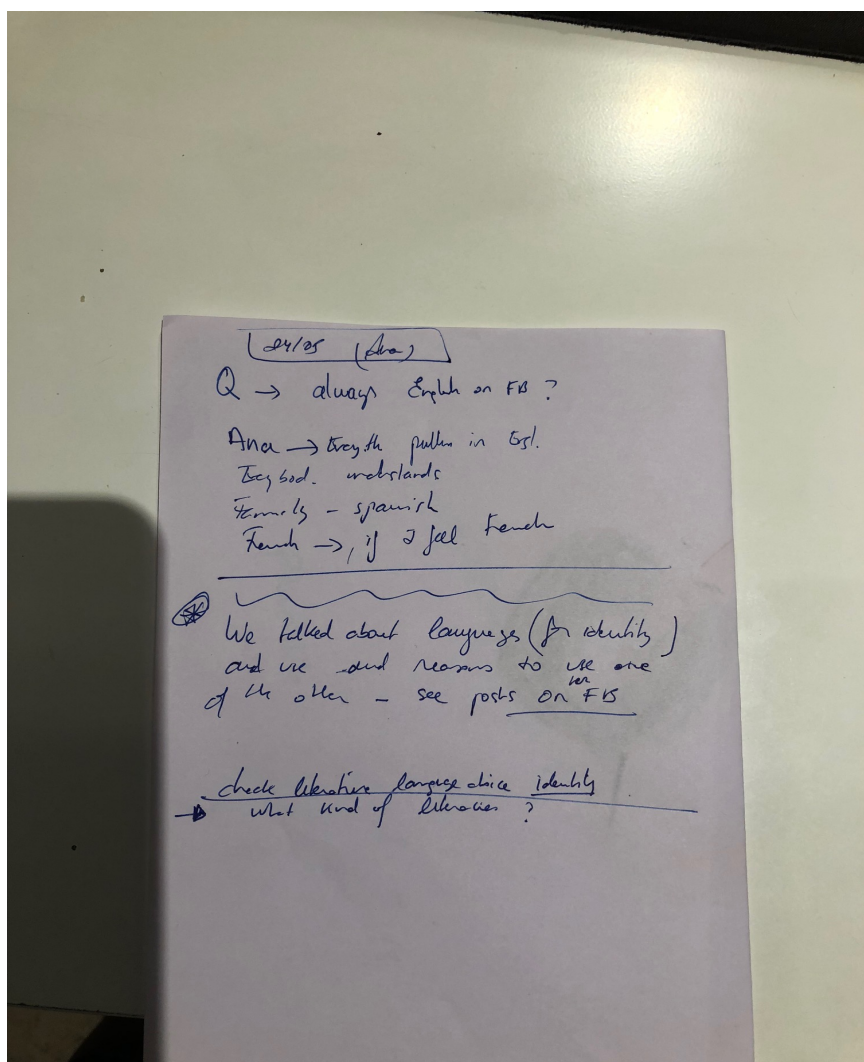
TEMPLATE FOR TAKING FIELD NOTES	
Date:	12/06/2016
Site:	the Room (bed)
Activity:	Face Book
Participants:	Anna
Length of Observation:	25 minutes
Summary Write a one paragraph summary or abstract of the day's events. Include analytic description, such as today was a good example of code-switching.	
Times I had computer in bed - 11:30 late had to get up early. I said go to sleep. just a min I am checking my FB page (why?) to see if there are any hours of change for tomorrow's classes and about when to meet to get the syndicate card for the Russian leader, her mother died,	
Narrative Write a detailed narrative of what you observed. Use (OC: _____) for observer comments.	
I do not trust her so now back to my bed to see if lights off. they were off. Telephone all the lie next to their beds - if I want to hear her no - they are always no for alarm clock. its the worst	

Music in the car all the time
 Some cousin of friends

Anna
 I have wants to tell
 I do not want the
 computer on the table when we eat

APPENDIX E: Examples of Note on Casual Conversations

This is a written note taken from Ana (18) about the use of different languages on FB, a short paragraph with my thoughts and a reminder to check language choice and identity construction in the literature. Below the development of transcript of a hint note on casual conversations.

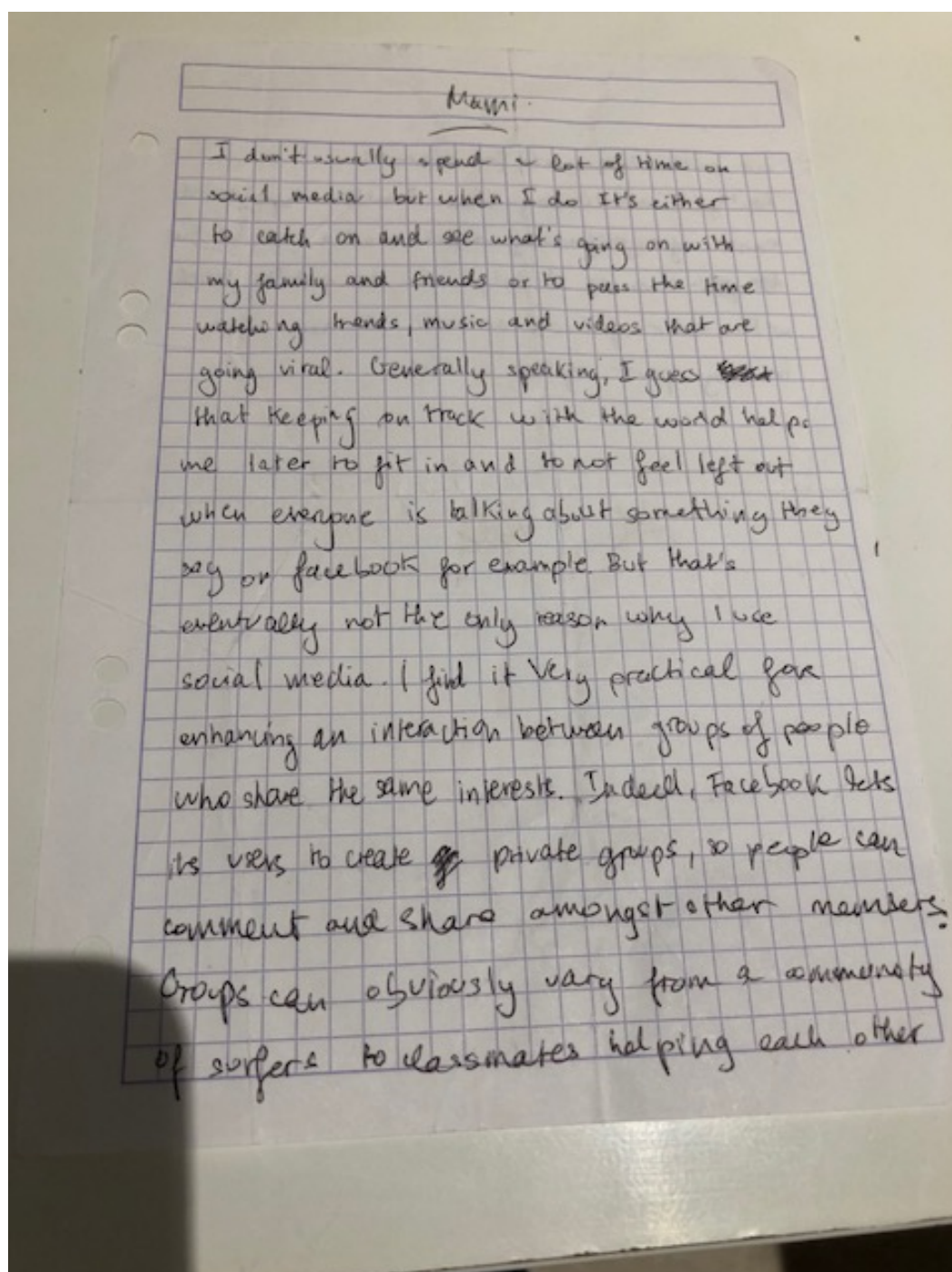


(Ana was posting something in English and I asked her: why in English? She said that everybody understands, it is a lingua franca but told me about how she used Spanish with family because it was more natural, also for football, or food etc., and then French only when she feels French (terrorist attacks in

Paris). Sometimes she mixes if she knows the person who will see her posts understands'. It makes me think about identity construction in different languages but in here it seems to be for different purposes than uses in minorities, why? Belonging to peer groups? Language choice is used to perform identity but related to what? Also, what kind of literacy practices she develops in each language, friendship or interest-driven? (Check data)

APPENDIX F: Feedback from Participants

Some of the feedback was carried by the participants on notes like the one below from Ana (18) or through messages (written or recorded) on WhatsApp.



Excerpt of feedback transcript by Marie (16) and Ana (18) on WhatsApp about networked publics. Researcher's questions are in bold:

What are your thoughts about this: when you post something, you think about the people who is going to read it or see it :

Marie (16): 'If your goal is to have more followers then yes you care about them, mine in Insta is about my personality and me as a model, it is made for people other than just my friends, to develop contacts for my modelling career, to promote my image and I follow people who are famous models so I learn...'

Ana (18): 'I am not sure, I use Insta to send memes to my friends, to post photos, to comment, share, to see what other people do and to get ideas from other accounts on deco, travelling, places to eat.... I follow one called 'c'est la vie ma cherie' and 'les parisiennes du monde' the two in English. They post quotes about life, nice photos etc., so I think for me it is the other way around, I am more interested in what others have to say according to my personality, I mean, yeah'.



lesparisiennesdumonde • Following

lesparisiennesdumonde "They don't teach you this in school. They don't show you the beauty of existing, they don't show you the wonder of the earth, they don't show you the unity that human beings are. They show you who's better, who's worse. They show you what they need to show you in order for their system to survive. They don't show you love."

Load more comments

SEPTEMBER 12

Add a comment...



cestlaviemacheriee • Following

cestlaviemacheriee "Take wrong turns. Talk to strangers. Open unmarked doors. And if you see a group of people in a field, go find out what they are doing. Do things without always knowing how they'll turn out. You're curious and smart and bored, and all you see is the choice between working hard and slacking off. There are so many adventures that you miss because you're waiting to think of a plan. To find them, look for tiny interesting choices. And remember that you are always making up the future as you go."



1,237 likes

JULY 12

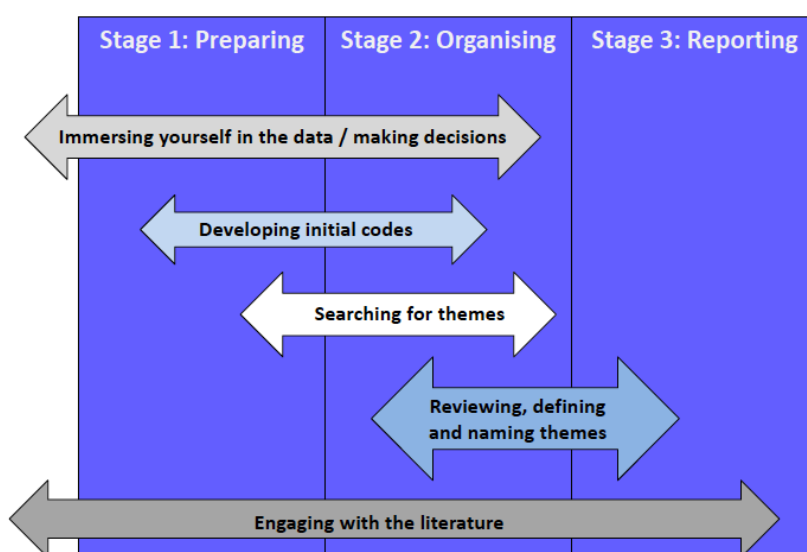
Add a comment...



APPENDIX G: Data Analysis

In this appendix I give details of the steps I followed to analyse the data and to outline the themes map in Stage 3.

An iterative approach to analysis



(c) Copyright - Nikki Boyd, 2012. Originally developed for the RCP / UCL Certificate and Diploma in Medical Education (2011-12)

Stage 1: Preparing and Systematic Open Coding

I first organised all field notes from participant observations by date to begin with, and then read the summaries and the narratives on them, the notes on casual conversations and the respondents' validation feedback to open code. I had in mind the frame of analysis that I was using from Ito et al. (2010, but I was also opened to any other pattern in the data. I did not transcribe the field notes, which were handwritten. However, I did transcribed the feedback from participants, and the casual conversation notes coming from observation and hinted by what participants were

saying and doing. I wrote summary memos to expand the casual conversation notes as they were very brief and schematic (Appendix E). I also highlight chunks in the data related to the frame work of analysis but also to identity construction and multiliteracies.

Stage 2: Organising Codes into Themes

I did repeated cross-reference when reading of all the data and I also checked artifacts and respondents' validations to develop initial coding related to the framework of analysis. I then mapped every code to key themes manually. Illustrative raw data was assigned to themes and this was used to guide my write up in the findings chapter. An excerpt of the procedure is provided below.

TEMPLATE FOR TAKING FIELD NOTES

Date: 6 April 5pm afternoon
 Site: Kitchen table (home)
 Activity: Snack after school day / laptop Netflix
 Participants: Ana (17)
 Length of Observation: 20 minutes

Summary

Write a one paragraph summary or abstract of the day's events. Include analytic description, such as today was a good example of code-switching.

Ana is eating and watching her favorite series on Netflix. Gossip girls. I ask her if she is not tired after school and says yes but she relax doing that and also all her friends are doing the same. they talk about it in school. They send messages on What's up

hanging out
 friendship

Narrative

Write a detailed narrative of what you observed. Use (OC:) for observer comments.

Watching Gossip girls is not only interacting with media or consuming it, it serves as identity construction (probably a boy will not watch that) and also for socializing with friends to have things to talk about and share. They love outfits also. and romantic stories. She said she relaxes because she just watches the episode

socialize
 knowledge he
 wanted about
 them

• Triangulation - What's up message for girlfriends / comment on episode
 by analyst / and I saw what she was doing
 shows group behavior - begins to gossip that watch that also

• Descriptive Field Notes

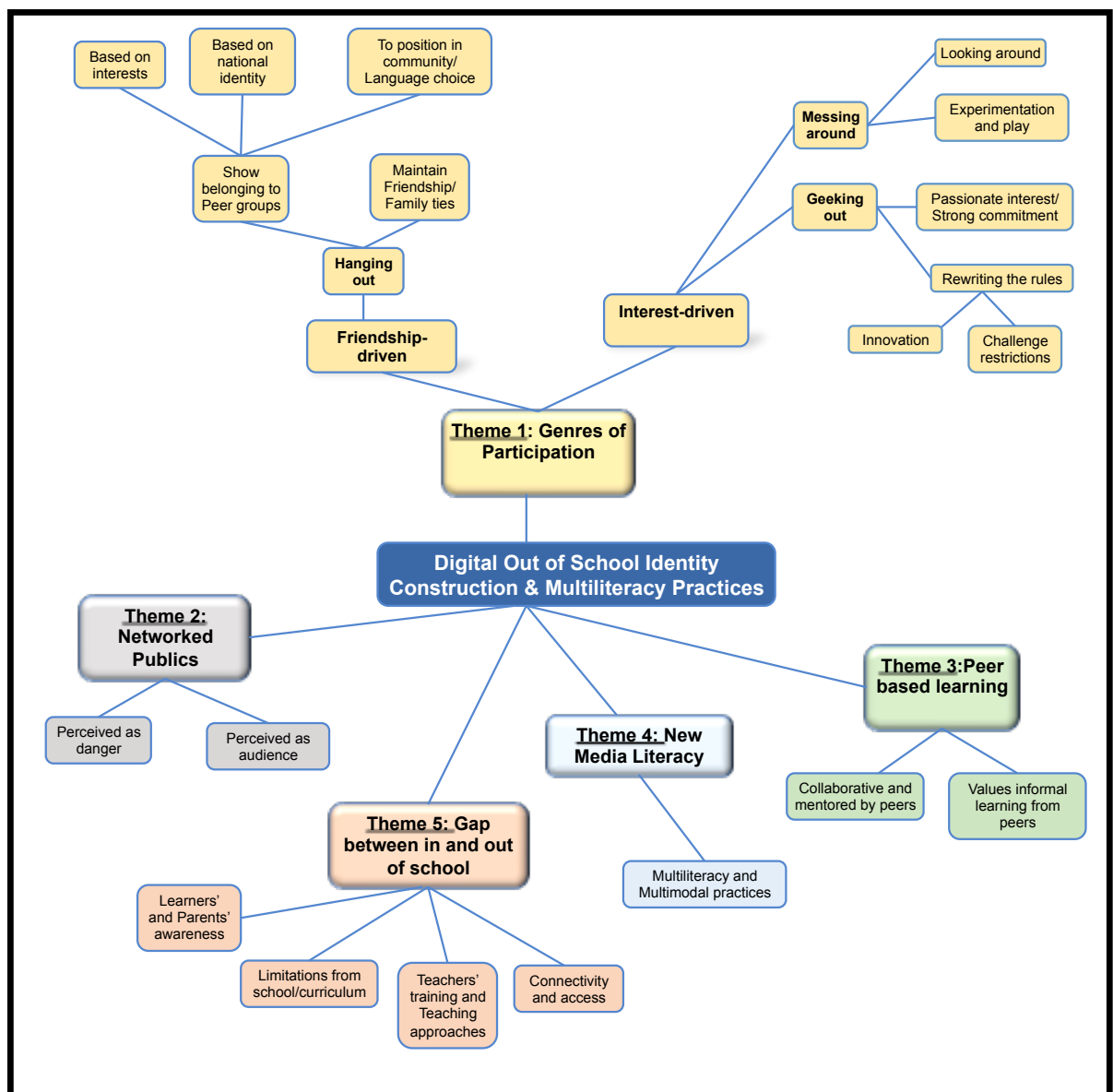
Notes

• Personal

Codes	Categories and Themes	Illustrative Data
<p>Maintain relationships far away friends,</p> <p>Social participation, what goes on, existing in SNSs</p> <p>Family parallel space, not mixed with friends</p> <p>Belonging to peer groups, university</p> <p>producing Videos streaming films, peers to learn (Ana, 18)</p> <p>Fashion Photos, self-learning on YouTube, looking around, experimenting (messing) (Marie, 16)</p> <p>Spanish language to construct identity and family ties but not the only language, role of English and French belonging to peer groups based on interest and to position ideologically (Ana, 18)</p> <p>Languages for practical reasons, mixes if audiences share codes (Marie, 16)</p>	<p>Categories:</p> <p>Friendship-driven</p> <p>Interest-driven</p> <p>Themes:</p> <p>Genres of participation</p>	<p>Friendship-driven: Marie (16) it is a way to be in touch now that I have moved with friends left behind (resentful) although she is forced to communicate that way now (prefers F2F) because she is far away and it is our fault. (Anecdote with lunch online with friends in France)</p> <p>Ana (18) a way to know what is going on, to exist also because everybody is on FB or social media.</p> <p>Both participants: parents can see but they do not comment or tag, because embarrassment with friends and not freedom to express freely, better different groups on WhatsApp that do not mingle, it is not cool either.</p> <p>Interest-driven: Ana (18): I enjoy making videos, I make them for friends, family for vacations, birthdays, I choose the music, talk to others about how to do things, effects I post them on FB or YouTube... everybody asks me if I can do it or how I do this or that, my father also</p> <p>For films I know there are rules, I know I have to find ways to go around, you have to be innovative, I know I try not to pay but I am a student and sometimes I watch films in low resolution image , bad quality.</p>

Stage 3: Reporting

In the final stage I recoded and re-categorized the codes and themes so that they became more refined in the final map. Abbott (2004, p.215) describes this process as ‘decorating a room, where you try, step back, move a few things, step back again, etc. ‘This helped to understand the procedure of refining and clear naming of themes and sub-themes.



APPENDIX H: Post-Data Collection and Analysis Confidentiality Form

It is my goal and responsibility to use the information that you have shared responsibly. Now that I have completed the data collection and analysis, I would like to give you the opportunity to provide me with additional feedback on how you prefer to have your data handled. Please check one of the following statements:

___ You may share the information just as I provided it. No details need to be changed and you may use my real name when using my data in publications or presentations.

___ You may share the information just as I provided it; however, please do not use my real name. I realize that others might identify me based on the data, even though my name will not be used.

___ You may share the information I provided; however, please do not use my real name and please change details that might make me identifiable to others. In particular, it is my wish that the following specific pieces of my data not be shared without first altering the data so as to make me unidentifiable (describe this data in the space below):_____

___ You may contact me if you have any questions about sharing my data with others. The best way to reach me is (provide phone number or email):

Respondent signature_____ Date_____

Investigator signature_____ Date _____

APPENDIX I: Disseminating the Research

The table reflects the full extent of research dissemination relevant to the thesis

Dissemination Platform	Contribution
Savitribai Puhle Pune University. Language Department, Pune, India.	Rodriguez, J. (January 2018). <i>What teenagers on SNSs tell us about their Multiliteracies and Identities</i> (Oral presentation)
Mercedes Benz International School Parents Association, Hinjewadi, Maharashtra, India.	Rodriguez, J (February 2018). <i>What parents do not know about what their children are doing online</i> (oral presentation)
WIN (Women International Network), Pune, India.	Rodriguez, J (February 2018) What parents do not know about what their children are doing online (oral presentation)
Savitribai Puhle Pune University. Language Department, Pune, India.	Rodriguez, J (February 2018) Teacher training workshop on pedagogies of multiliteracies for teachers from different Institutions based on findings from thesis (oral presentation)
VI International Conference of Hispanism, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India.	8-9th March 2018: Submission to orally present findings from doctoral research (oral presentation)
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Foreign Language Department, Pune, India/Spanish Embassy and Cervantes Institute in Delhi	Rodriguez, J. (March 2018) Multiliteracies, multimodality and Poetry: Exhibition on poet Gloria Fuertes. Workshop on poetry and multiliteracies
UCL IOE Doctoral Summer Conference, London	June 2018: Intended submission to orally present findings from doctoral research (oral presentation)
UKLA 54th International Conference 2018, Cardiff	July 2018: Intended submission to orally present findings from doctoral research.
Savitribai Phule Pune University, Language Department, Pune, India	2018- 2019 Collaborative project for App creation to promote Digital Multiliteracy in non-English Curriculum public schools in Maharashtra, India.